

Can silencing of gene for 'love hormone' reduce sociability?

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A team of researchers led by psychologists at the University of Georgia have found that the silencing of a specific gene may affect human social behavior, including a person's ability to form healthy relationships or to recognize the emotional states of others.

In their experiment, they examined how a process known as methylation, which can reduce the expression of specific genes, affects a gene called OXT, which is responsible for producing oxytocin.

What they found was that those whose OXT gene activity was more restricted had more difficulty recognizing emotional facial expressions, and they tended to have more anxiety about their relationships with loved ones. These participants also displayed reduced gray matter within an area of the brain called the fusiform gyrus, which is important for face processing and social cognition.

"All of our tests indicate that the OXT gene plays an important role in social behavior and brain function," said Brian W. Hass, the study's lead author.

Read full, original post: [Silencing of gene affects people's social lives](#)