

Human tendency for obesity not result of evolutionary adaption to survive famine

Scientists have found that nearly all common obesity-related genes didn't actually evolve from an evolutionary advantage from our ancestors, who would have suffered periods of time without food.

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The idea, coined the "thrifty gene hypothesis" by James Neel in 1962, suggests that the elimination of famine in developed countries, means that genes once useful for storing fat are now causing widespread obesity, with one in four adults fitting that description.

But nine out of 115 genes known to be associated with obesity showed evidence of being under positive selection, according to the [new] study....

John Speakman...said: "This is probably the hardest evidence so far against the thrifty gene hypothesis – our ambition here is for people to entertain a wider range of ideas about where the genetic basis of complex diseases, like obesity, comes from. The process of evolution is a lot more complex than just the spread of favorable traits by natural selection and the thrifty gene is like an emblem of this older way of thinking about evolutionary aspects of medicine."

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: [Myth busted that obesity evolved to stave off famine](#)