Does one genetic glitch determine risk of both autism and schizophrenia?

From their earliest descriptions, schizophrenia and autism have been inextricably linked.

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Studies from the past several years show that the same genetic glitch — deletion of a stretch of DNA on chromosome 22 — raises the risk for both conditions. Up to 30 percent of individuals missing this region, called 22q11.2, develop a psychotic disorder — most commonly schizophrenia. And up to 50 percent are diagnosed with autism.

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First, if all deletions of 22q11.2 were truly associated with schizophrenia (and not autism), as some contend, we would expect that a diagnosis of autism in childhood in these cases would be associated with an increased risk of schizophrenia later in life.

But there is no such association…[Researchers] found that those diagnosed with autism are no more likely to develop schizophrenia than those without autism.

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There is increasing interest in conceptualizing what we now know as ‘autism’ and ‘schizophrenia’ from a dimensional rather than categorical perspective.

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Although we believe that autism associated with 22q11.2 deletion is separate from schizophrenia linked to the genetic anomaly, seeking a better understanding of the similarities and differences between the two conditions is important.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: Same DNA deletion paves paths to autism, schizophrenia