

Why some people struggle with shift work fatigue: It's in the genes

Some people adapt easily to shift work, but not everyone can handle constant disruptions to their daily rhythm. Finnish researchers have now found that a melatonin receptor gene influences tolerance to shift work.

[T]he new study is the first time the genetic factors underlying poor tolerance to shift work were systematically examined.

Covering the entire genome, the study discovered that a common variation in the melatonin receptor 1A (MTNR1A) gene is linked to the job-related exhaustion experienced by shift workers.

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The study was led by Professor Tiina Paunio, University of Helsinki, and involved Finnish shift workers from many different lines of work.

The differences in the job-related exhaustion reported by employees were contrasted with genetic differences in their entire genome.

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The influence of the risk variant of the MTNR1A gene may explain the degree to which light exposure at night disrupts the circadian rhythm of shift workers.

"The variant we have now discovered can only explain a small part of the variation between individuals, and it cannot be used as a basis to determine a person's tolerance to shift work," Paunio points out.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: Scientists find the genetic cause of shift work fatigue