

Viruses in our genome may have influenced brain development, neurological diseases

Over millions of years, retroviruses have been incorporated into our human DNA, where they today make up almost 10 per cent of the total genome. A research group at Lund University in Sweden has now discovered a mechanism through which these retroviruses may have an impact on gene expression. This means that they may have played a significant role in the development of the human brain as well as in various neurological diseases.

Retroviruses are a special group of viruses [that]...can be found in a part of DNA that was previously considered unimportant, so called junk-DNA....

“[R]etroviruses account for 8-10 per cent of the total genome. If it turns out that they are able to influence the production of proteins, this will provide us with a huge new source of information about the human brain,” says Johan Jakobsson [from Lund University]. And this is precisely what the researchers discovered.

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The differences between mice and humans are particularly important in this context. Many of the retroviruses that have been built into the human DNA do not exist in species other than humans and our closest relatives....

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [Viruses in genome important for our brain](#)