Your roommate's genes could influence your health and behavior

Researchers at the European Bioinformatics Institute (EMBL-EBI) have shown that the health of individual mice is influenced by the genetic makeup of their partners. Their findings…indicate that research into genetics and disease should include the genotypes of both individuals and their partners.

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Most traits are genetically controlled to some extent, for example one's sleep preferences have a genetic component. But nothing happens in isolation, so if your partner is a night owl and keeps you awake later than you'd like, their genotypes might be partly to blame.

"People influence your behavior, health and well-being, and you influence theirs – this much we know already. What's been missing is recognition that there is a genetic basis for this," explains Amelie Baud of EMBL-EBI, who led the study.

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[Researchers] found that social genetic effects explained up to 29% of phenotypic variance in the traits measured. The traits most affected were wound healing, anxiety, immune function, and body weight. In some cases, the contribution of social genetic effects exceeded that of direct genetic effects.
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"Although today's study was carried out in mice living together, it provides food for thought about how individuals can be influenced by the genetic makeup of the people in their lives…," says Oliver Stegle of EMBL-EBI.

[The study can be found here.]

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: Genetic makeup of 'roommate' impacts health