

Autism risk linked to 18 new genes related to communication, socialization difficulties

Researchers have isolated 18 new genes believed to increase risk for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), a finding that may pave the way for earlier diagnosis and possible future drug treatments for the disorder.

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Researchers...[noted that] people with mutations in those genes had reduced “adaptive functioning”, including the ability to communicate and socialize.

“Detection of the mutation would lead to prioritization of these individuals for comprehensive clinical assessment and referral for earlier intervention and could end long-sought questions of causation,” the authors write.

The finding highlights the promise of big data to link fine-grained genetic changes with real world illness, something the emerging discipline of precision medicine will harness to better target treatments.

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“This study is a good first step but we’re not there yet – much larger studies will be needed,” said Dr Jake Gratten from the Institute for Molecular Bioscience at the University of Queensland.

But the study findings went beyond autism, isolating ASD-linked genetic changes that increase risk for heart problems and diabetes, raising the possibility of preventative screening for participants and relatives.

[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: [Big data reveals more suspect autism genes](#)