

Ancestors' climate shaped your nose — along with genetics

Though you undoubtedly inherited your distinctive nose from your parents, its shape was sculpted over time by adaptations to your ancestors' local climate, suggests a recent study.

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Mark D. Shriver, a professor of anthropology at Penn State University, [examined the noses of people] from four populations: North Europeans, South Asians, East Asians and West Africans, [and found that] the width of the nostrils and the base of the nose measurements differed across populations more than could be accounted for by genetic drift.

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Exploring how local climate might have contributed to differences in nose shape, the researchers looked at the distribution of nasal traits in relation to local temperatures and humidity and found that the width of the nostrils strongly correlated with temperature and absolute humidity... Since narrower nostrils allow the nose to humidify and warm the air more efficiently, this was probably essential in cold, dry climates.

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[However,] some scientists remain skeptical.

"Although interesting, I think that the study oversimplifies the possible adaptation that has occurred by simply evaluating the external shape," said Dr. Stella Lee, an assistant professor at University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine.

[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: [Climate, not just genetics, shaped your nose, study says](#)

For more background on the Genetic Literacy Project, read [GLP](#) on Wikipedia.