

What causes autism? It's mostly genetic, study says

For a condition as complex as autism, it's almost certain that both [genes](#) and environment play an important role. But teasing apart how much DNA contributes to the developmental condition and how much is due to environmental exposures remains a subject of much debate.

In a [study published in JAMA](#), researchers say they have come up with the most accurate figure to date for the role that genes play in autism. Led by Sven Sandin, an assistant professor of psychiatry at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, the scientists re-analyzed existing data from all children born in Sweden between 1982 and 2006. The team had looked at the same data previously, focusing on pairs of siblings, both of whom were diagnosed with autism. But this time, they applied a different method for tracking the diagnosis.

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[W]hen Sandin tracked autism diagnoses over time among the sibling pairs, he found that genetics likely accounts for around 83% of the disorder. That compares to nearly 90% reported in previous studies of twins only. Using the new model, environmental factors probably contribute around 17% to the risk of developing autism. "This is why it is important to have different study designs," says Sandin.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [This Is How Much of Autism Is Genetic](#)