

## Reexamining common genetics lesson: At least 49 genes contribute to earlobe attachment

A common, hands-on method for teaching genetics in grade school encourages students to compare their earlobes with those of their parents: Are they attached and smoothly mesh with the jawline? Or are they detached and dangly? The answer is meant to teach students about dominant and recessive genes.

Simple, right? Not so fast.

New research led by the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health and School of Dental Medicine, and published online...in the American Journal of Human Genetics, reveals that the lesson is much more complicated, with an interplay of at least 49 genes contributing to earlobe attachment.

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The study was an international collaboration involving investigators in the United Kingdom and China, and included data from the U.S.-based personal genetics company 23andMe Inc.

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The results don't mean that grade school science teachers should stop using traits like earlobes to teach genetics. But the lesson needs to be updated to show that even a seemingly simple inherited trait, such as earlobe attachment, involves a complex and fascinating interplay of genes that geneticists are only beginning to understand.

*[Editor's note: Read the [full study](#)]*

**Read full, original post:** [Do your ears hang low? The complex genetics behind earlobe attachment](#)