

## Could your genes 'nudge' you towards risky behavior?

A massive new study that included data from more than a million people suggests that genetics may nudge some individuals toward more risky behavior like smoking, drinking, and speeding.

Conducted by an international team of scientists led by researchers from the [Social Science Genetic Association Consortium](#) (SSGAC), the study published [January 14] in the journal [Nature Genetics](#) identified 124 genetic variants associated with a person's willingness to take risks.

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While the focus of the new research looks at genetic influence, the researchers note that environmental, cultural and demographic circumstances play a much more significant role in a person's tolerance for risk. However, the study illustrates that genetics has a small but important role.

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This study is significant on many levels. For one, risk tolerance is among the most intensively studied traits in social science, because it plays a role in predicting economic and social outcomes as well as personality measures. This study may also contribute to the debate around whether having a risk tolerance in one area, say a willingness to bungee jump, corresponds with taking a risk in another realm, like taking a risk financially. The researchers found evidence of shared genetic influences across risk tolerance and risky behaviors.

**Read full, original post:** [The Genetics of Taking Risks](#)