

Intriguing links between blood types and COVID-19 outcomes

Why do some people infected with the coronavirus suffer only mild symptoms, while others become deathly ill?

Geneticists have been scouring our DNA for clues. Now, a study by European scientists is the first to document a strong statistical link between [genetic variations and Covid-19](#), the illness caused by the coronavirus.

Variations at two spots in the human genome are associated with an increased risk of respiratory failure in patients with Covid-19, the researchers found. One of these spots includes the gene that determines blood types.

Having Type A blood was linked to a 50 percent increase in the likelihood that a patient would need to get oxygen or to go on a ventilator, according to the new study.

The study was equally striking for the genes that failed to turn up. The coronavirus attaches to a protein called ACE2 on the surface of human cells in order to enter them, for example. But genetic variants in ACE2 did not appear to make a difference in the risk of severe Covid-19.

The findings suggest that relatively unexplored factors may be playing a large role who develops life-threatening Covid-19.

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Scientists have already determined that factors like age and underlying disease put people at extra risk of developing a severe case of Covid-19. But geneticists are hoping that a DNA test might help identify patients who will need aggressive treatment.

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