

The genetics of loneliness

Growing isolation and loneliness, particularly among the elderly, have prompted public health responses. Two years ago, the United Kingdom created the first national strategy to deal with the [health consequences of isolation](#). The National Academies of Sciences have begun to study the problem in the United States.

But beyond trying to combat social isolation, scientists are also researching for possible genetic predispositions toward loneliness. They also look at where those associations might overlap with risks for specific health outcomes.

[Two recently completed studies](#) offer compelling evidence of a genetic predisposition toward loneliness. Both studies, which included data from 23andMe and the UK Biobank, found shared genetic associations between loneliness and other conditions like cardiovascular disease, as well as psychiatric and metabolic disorders.

[One study](#), led by researchers at the University of California at San Diego, found a clear association between loneliness and coronary artery disease, particularly among women.

Follow the latest news and policy debates on sustainable agriculture, biomedicine, and other 'disruptive' innovations. Subscribe to our newsletter.

[SIGN UP](#)

[\[A second\] study](#) found that individuals with genetic risk for loneliness and major depressive disorder were more likely to have clinical diagnoses for coronary artery disease.

[This is an excerpt. Read the full article here](#)