Study Says Genes Predict of Suicide Risk

February 2, 2010 By David Evans

It turns out that the risk of committing suicide might have a genetic component over and above underlying depression. The study this assertion is based on is rather complex, though elegant. The findings are pretty straightforward, however.

There are certain genes involved in nerve growth. Changes in the make up of those genes (called single-nucleotide polymorphisms or SNPs) can affect nerve development.

Researchers looked at SNPs in depressed people who had attempted suicide, depressed people who had not attempted suicide, and people without depression or suicide attempts at all. They found five SNPs that were strongly associated with suicide attempts, over and above depression. While this finding won't have any immediate impact on diagnosing or treating suicidal people, it could in the future if it is confirmed.

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