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News Release

Issued: Tuesday 19 January 2016

Physical attraction linked to genes that control height, study finds

Our choice of romantic partner can be determined by genetics more than we might expect, a study suggests.

Researchers have discovered that the genes that determine our height also influence why people are attracted to partners of similar heights to themselves.

The findings help to explain why people choose partners of similar height to themselves.

Scientists at the University of Edinburgh's Roslin Institute and MRC Human Genetics Unit analysed genetic information from more than 13,000 heterosexual couples.

They found that 89 per cent of the genetic variation that determines a person's height also influences their height preference in a mate.

By analysing the genetic information that determines a person's height, researchers say they can predict the height of that person's partner with 13% accuracy.

The study used data from participants in the UK Biobank, a major genetic study into the role of nature and nurture in health and disease.

It is published in the journal *Genome Biology* and was funded by the Medical Research Council and the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council.

Dr Albert Tenesa, who led the study, said: "How we choose our partners has important biological implications for human populations. This study brings us closer to understanding the complex nature of sexual attraction and the mechanisms that drive human variation."

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