CultureCase

Creativity’s genetic similarity to schizophrenia and bipolar disorder

This research was conducted by **Robert A Power and 24 others** at **a variety of institutions worldwide**

Summary

Based on the theory that some psychiatric disorders and creativity have shared attributes, the authors of this study investigated whether common genetic characteristics that place individuals at risk of schizophrenia and bipolar disorder might also underlie creative cognitive traits. The researchers concluded that the genetic features influencing creativity are indeed shared by people at risk of developing schizophrenia and bipolar disorder.

Creative individuals were defined as those belonging to artistic societies

Firstly, the researchers found that schizophrenia and bipolar genetic characteristics accurately predicted the corresponding disorder in a sample of 86,292 individuals from the general population of Iceland. They then looked at which of the individuals in the sample belonged to artistic societies. Due to the common genetic features between the disorders and creativity, as well as the increased risk of developing schizophrenia when having a relative with the disorder, it might be suggested that creative people should, on average, have a near-relative who has schizophrenia. However, findings showed that the association between these psychiatric disorders and artist status was not solely the result of familial relatedness, further emphasising the common genetic roots between schizophrenia and creativity.

The association between creative activities and the disorders was also investigated

Individuals at risk of developing schizophrenia or bipolar disorder were more likely to have an artistic profession and report more artistic activities than those without predisposing features in two large Dutch and Swedish population studies. The association between creativity and schizophrenia and bipolar disorder persisted regardless of years spent in school and university, showing that creativity couldn't be influenced by differences in educational attainment.

This summary is by **Anna Kolliakou, King's Knowledge Exchange Associate**

Keywords

creativity **mental health** **Iceland** **genetics**

Title	Polygenic risk scores for schizophrenia and bipolar disorder predict creativity
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Author email	**kstefans@decode.is**

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