

Coffee or tea? The answer might be in your genes

Do you prefer coffee or tea? The answer to that question might in part be down to your genes, research suggests.

Scientists say a genetic **predisposition** to **perceiving** the bitterness of particular substances appears to **nudge** us towards one beverage or the other.

predisposition 倾向

perceive 感觉; 感知

nudge 推动

The study, published in the Scientific Reports journal, involved two sets of data. The first was a large twin study which showed that, at least in those of European ancestry, particular **genetic variants** are linked to the strength of perception of different tastes: one specific variant was associated with slightly higher ratings of bitterness for caffeine, another to greater bitterness for quinine and a third to greater bitterness for a drug known as propylthiouracil, or prop.

genetic variant 基因变异

The team found people with a greater genetic predisposition to perceiving the bitterness of caffeine drank a little more coffee, but an increased perception of the bitterness of quinine and prop were linked to a small reduction in coffee drinking.

“While the effect of perception on your daily coffee intake might be relatively small—only a 0.15 cup per day increase—from a normal caffeine taster to a strong caffeine taster, it actually makes you 20% more likely to become a heavy drinker—drinking more than four cups per day,” said Jue Sheng Ong, first author of the research from QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute in Australia.

“Our taste genes **partially** play a role in how much coffee, tea or alcohol we drink,” he said. “The preference towards tea can be seen as a consequence of **abstaining** from coffee, because our genes might have made coffee a little too bitter for our palates to handle.”

partially 部分地; 偏袒地

abstain 自制; 放弃