Date Published: 06/05/2011

Title: 3

Body: 80

Sentences: 4

The Daily Telegraph (London)

May 6, 2011 Friday   
Edition 2;   
National Edition

'**Happiness gene'** found  
  
**SECTION:** NEWS; Pg. 8  
  
**LENGTH:** 75 words

A "**HAPPINESS GENE**" that has a strong influence on how satisfied people are with their lives has been discovered.

Those with two sets of the gene - one from each parent - are almost twice as likely to say they are content than those who lack a copy, researchers at the London School of Economic and Political Science found.

The gene, called 5-HTT, is responsible for how well nerve cells manage to distribute serotonin, a chemical that helps control mood.

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Title: 4

Body: 59

Sentences: 3

The Express

May 6, 2011 Friday   
Edition 1;   
National Edition

Happiness, at a stretch  
  
**SECTION:** EDITORIAL; OPINION, LEADING ARTICLES; Pg. 12  
  
**LENGTH:** 56 words

SCIENTISTS have identified a **happiness gene** and say that some people are blessed with a longer and more efficient version of it than others, enabling them to be in good spirits more often.

After yesterday's electoral pasting for the Lib Dems, perhaps someone should get round to Nick Clegg's house sharpish and give his a bit of a stretch.

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Title: 12

Body: 703

Sentences: 29

Guardian Unlimited

May 6, 2011 Friday

Happiness linked to a gene that comes in long and short versions  
  
**BYLINE:** Ian Sample[guardian.co.uk](mailto:guardian.co.uk)  
  
**LENGTH:** 709 words

Your overall happiness may depend in part on whether you drew the long or short version of a gene, say researchers

In work that gives cranky teenagers another reason to blame their parents for all life's woes, researchers have uncovered a genetic link to happiness.

The study of more than 2,500 Americans revealed two variants of a gene that influenced how satisfied - or dissatisfied - people were with their lot.

Those born with two long versions of the gene (one is passed down from each parent) were more likely to declare themselves "very satisfied" with life than those who inherited two short versions.

The study marks a tentative step towards explaining the mystery of why some people seem naturally happier than others.

"This gives us more insight into the biological mechanisms that influence life satisfaction," said [Jan-Emmanuel De Neve, a researcher at the London School of Economics and Political Science](http://personal.lse.ac.uk/deneve/).

"If you're feeling down, you can say it's your biology telling you life is less rosy that it is," he added.

A greater understanding of **happiness** **genes** might in future allow would-be parents to create a child who will be more satisfied with their life.

Happiness is only partly influenced by genetic makeup.

Studies in twins suggest that genes account for roughly a third to a half of the variation in happiness between people.

It is not yet known how many genes affect how cheerful we are.

De Neve looked at the genetic makeup of 2,574 people selected to be representative of the general population, whose medical histories were recorded for the [US National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health](http://www.cpc.unc.edu/projects/lifecourse/research_projects/add_health).

Among the records were answers to a question participants were asked in their early 20s about life satisfaction.

In response to the question, "How satisfied are you with your life as a whole", they answered either "very satisfied", "satisfied", "neither satisfied or dissatisfied", "dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied".

[Writing in the Journal of Human Genetics](http://dx.doi.org/10.1038/jhg.2011.39), De Neve describes how roughly 40% said they were "very satisified" with life, and among these, 35.4% had two long variants of the gene and only 19.1% had two short versions.

Of those who were "dissatisfied" with life, 26.2% had two long variants of the gene, while 20% had two short versions.

That indicates a slight over-representation of the long variants in happier people.

The gene, known as 5-HTT, is involved with the transport of serotonin, a feelgood chemical, in the brain.

The longer variant leads to more efficient release and recycling of the neurotransmitter.

De Neve calculated that, everything else being equal, having one long version of the gene increased the number of people claiming to be "very satisfied" with life by around 8.5%. Having two long versions raised the number by 17.3%.

[In unpublished work, De Neve and other researchers have since replicated the result in a separate group of people](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1553633).

De Neve urged caution over the result, however, and emphasised that inheriting two short versions of the gene did not condemn a person to a life of misery any more than two long versions would make someone impervious to sadness.

"This gene has an important influence, but you cannot say it causes happiness. Happiness is hugely complex and your experiences throughout the course of your life will remain the dominant force on that," he said.

[A 2009 study](http://rspb.royalsocietypublishing.org/content/early/2009/02/21/rspb.2008.1788) by Elaine Fox at the University of Essex suggested that people who carried long versions of the 5-HTT gene had a greater tendency to [focus on the positives in life](http://www.guardian.co.uk/science/2009/feb/25/optimism-brightside-gene-mental-health).

The "bright side" version of the gene might bolster people's resilience to stressful events, and protect against anxiety, depression and other mental health problems.

[Ed Diener, a psychologist at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign](http://www.psychology.illinois.edu/people/ediener) and author of the 2008 book, Happiness: Unlocking the Mysteries of Psychological Wealth, said: "We are just beginning to understand the actual genetics of happiness, and how genes might influence brain hormones and other physiology that influence our well-being.

"This exciting work offers insights that one day may help us counter disorders such as depression.

Parents one day might have the choice of whether to choose genes that will create a child who is more satisfied with his or her life."

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Title: 8

Body: 331

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The Independent (London)

May 6, 2011 Friday   
First Edition

Discovered: the genetic secret of a happy life  
  
**BYLINE:** Jeremy Laurance Health Editor  
  
**SECTION:** NEWS; Pg. 10  
  
**LENGTH:** 327 words

SOME PEOPLE are born happy, scientists say. Researchers have identified a "**happiness** **gene**" that makes people more likely to feel satisfied with their lives.

Their sunny dispostion is an accident of birth, at least in part.

Those who carry the less efficient version of the gene are more likely to be pessimistic.

Their tendency to see the glass half empty is equally a part of their inheritance.

The finding is the first to demonstrate a link between the gene, called 5-HTT, and satisfaction.

People with the long version are more likely to be cheerful while sulkiness is the default position of those with the short version.

Knowing which version of the gene they carry may help people improve their mood.

Jan-Emmanual De Neve, a behavioural economist at the London School of Economics, which led the study, said: "In five or 10 years, people will be able to read their genome.

If you find you have a predisposition to see the glass as half empty then when you feel down, you may think 'Maybe my biology is fooling me into thinking my situation is less rosy than it is.'

That combined with your own will power may help you get out of the psychological dip and go above and beyond.

Knowledge is power."

The 5-HTT gene, which regulates the brain chemical serotonin, has been indirectly linked with happiness before.

In research published in 2009, scientists showed that people with the long version of the gene had a subliminal tendency to avoid negative images and select positive ones.

They concluded that the gene contributed to "attentional bias in the selection of emotional stimuli".

The new study, in the Journal of Human Genetics, goes further by linking the gene with life satisfaction, now recognised as fundamental to happiness.

More than 2,500 adults in their twenties were asked how satisfied they were with their life.

Those with two long versions of the gene were 17 per cent more likely to say they were very satisfied.

Date Published: 06/05/2011

Title: 7

Body: 137

Sentences: 9

The Sun (England)

May 6, 2011 Friday   
Edition 1;   
National Edition

Satisfied with life? It's down to genes  
  
**SECTION:** NEWS; Pg. 35  
  
**LENGTH:** 131 words

SCIENTISTS have found a "**happiness gene**" in the brain which they believe is the key to our basic level of contentment.

The gene - called 5-HTT - comes in "long" and "short" versions.

People who inherit two long copies, one from each parent, tend to be the most content.

People with two short versions are the least satisfied with their lot, the UK study revealed.

Experts from the London School of Economics analysed genetic data from more than 2,500 people.

Their results showed 35 per cent of people with two long genes were "very satisfied" with life, compared with just 19 per cent of those with two "shorts".

Study leader Jan-Emmanuel De Neve said: "This gene helps to explain why some people tend to be naturally happier than others.

It is instrumental in shaping our contentment levels."