

Nota de prensa



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Scientists find a genetic association between depression and obesity

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University of Granada researchers have demonstrated for the first time that there is a genetic association between depression and obesity, two of the most prevalent conditions in Western society. This pioneer study has revealed that depression alters the effect that the gene known as the "FTO obesity gene" has on the patient's body mass index.

The research was conducted by Margarita Rivera Sánchez, from the University of Granada research group Cibersam, who worked at the Institute of Psychiatry del King's College, London with a sample of 2,440 patients diagnosed with recurring depression, and 809 healthy controls.

This is a very relevant finding, as it suggests that there is a genetic association between mood disorders and obesity. Furthermore, suffering mild symptoms of depression –which is very frequent in our society– might moderate the effect of the FTO gene on the general population, and might help identify who is at a higher risk of suffering overweight or obesity.

A Joint Study

While the influence of "obesity gene" variants on body mass index and the association between obesity and psychiatric disorders were separately investigated, this is the first study to investigate these three elements together. The initial results of this study have been confirmed in two independent samples, the first one including 18,000 subjects of different ethnic groups from 21 countries.

At present, depression and obesity are highly prevalent in our society, and they represent a major threat to public health. Both conditions are important risk factors for chronic physical disorders as diabetes type II, heart disorders and high blood pressure.

Margarita Rivera affirms that "there is evidence that obesity is more prevalent among individuals with depression, although this association is still unclear". Recent studies support the hypothesis that etiological factors –including genetic factors– are also involved in depression, obesity and physical disorders. A number of research groups have proven that a variation in the "FTO obesity gene" is associated with body mass index and with a higher risk for obesity.

<http://canal.ugr.es/health-science-and-technology/item/54476>

Información bibliográfica completa:

Rivera et al., Depressive disorder moderates the effect of the FTO gene on body mass index. *Molecular Psychiatry* (19 April 2011). - doi:10.1038/mp.2011.45.