

Science Versus The "Gay Gene"

By Frank York

The Human Genome Project, which completed mapping the human genetic molecular structure in 2003, has yet to find a "gay gene," according to researchers in the August, 2004 issue of *Reason and Revelation*.

Drs. Brad Harrub, Bert Thompson, and Dave Miller, note that the search for a gay gene has consistently failed over the past two decades in spite of the efforts of gay activist researchers to locate a genetic basis for homosexuality.

The authors observe: "Skin color and other genetic traits can be traced through inheritance patterns and simple Mendelian genetics. Homosexuals are identified not by a trait or a gene, but rather by their actions. Without the action, they would be indistinguishable from all other people."

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The first is Dr. Simon LeVay's well-known brain study published in 1991. Dr. LeVay reported subtle differences between the brains of homosexual and heterosexual men. He measured the size of the interstitial nuclei of the anterior hypothalamus (INAH) in postmortem tissue from women, men presumed to be heterosexual, and homosexual men.

The study, though provocative, contained numerous flaws and has never been replicated by other researchers. In his study, LeVay used the brains of homosexuals who had died of AIDS. It is known that AIDS decreases testosterone levels, so it is possible that this would cause these individuals to have a smaller INAH.

In the well-known twins study by Michael Bailey and Richard Pillard, the researchers examined the rates of homosexuality among fraternal twins, identical twins, non-identical twins, and adoptive brothers. Bailey and Pillard found that 52% of identical twins were homosexual; 22% of fraternal twins were homosexual; 11% of adoptive brothers were homosexual; and other similar findings.

Harrub, Thompson, and Miller note significant flaws with

They note that even if a gay gene is found, it would still not mean that individuals need to act upon homosexual desires. "Merely having the gene would not force one to carry out the behavior. For instance, if scientists were able to document that a 'rape gene' existed, we certainly would not blame an individual for possessing this gene, but neither would we allow him to act upon that rape disposition."

Activist Researchers Fail To Prove Existence Of Gay Gene

The writers review the research on three of the most often quoted studies that are used in support of the theory that a gay gene exists.

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this study: "If there was, in fact, a 'gay gene,' then all of the identical twins should have reported a homosexual orientation. And yet, in nearly half of the twins studied, one brother was not homosexual."

The authors also examined Dr. Dean Hamer's study of the X chromosome and DNA markers he maintained was evidence of a genetic basis for homosexuality.

Hamer and his team collected data on 76 gay males and 40 gay brother pairs and examined the DNA markers in a region called q28—a gene located at the tip of the long arm of the X chromosome. Hamer found that 33 of his subjects exhibited similar genetic markers in q28.

Hamer's study, however, was also flawed. One of the basic problems, according to critics, was that he failed to test a heterosexual group of males as a control group. Heterosexuals may possess the same marker in q28 that he discovered in the homosexuals he tested. In addition, other researchers have attempted to replicate his findings and have found statistically insignificant findings. One researcher noted that the results "suggest that there is a linkage, [but] it's so weak it's not important." ■