

Human chromosome transplant in mice

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British scientists successfully transplanted human chromosomes into mice, a procedure that might provide clues to the genetic causes of disease.

The mice were genetically engineered to carry a copy of human chromosome 21. Genetic information on Chromosome 21 has been linked to Down Syndrome, one form of Alzheimer's, and several types of cancer including Lou Gehrig's disease, the Guardian reported Friday.

About one in 1,000 people are born with an extra copy of the chromosome.

Genetic studies of the mice are expected to help scientists determine which genes give rise to medical conditions prevalent among people with Down's syndrome, said Elizabeth Fisher of the National Institute for Medical Research in London.

Some medical researchers described the work as a "tour de force," but critics said the procedure was pushing the boundaries of genetic manipulation too far blurring the distinction of what was biologically human.

The findings were reported in the journal *Science*.

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