

Study: Dancers are genetically different

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Hebrew University researchers in Jerusalem say they've determined dancers are genetically different from the general population.

Psychology Professor Richard Ebstein and colleagues say DNA examinations have determined dancers show consistent differences in two key genes from the general population.

The finding is not surprising, said Ebstein -- head of the university's Scheinfeld Center for Human Genetics in the Social Sciences -- since other studies have shown genetic differences among musicians and athletes.

Ebstein and his researchers examined 85 dancers and advanced dancing students in Israel and found variants of two genes that provide the code for the serotonin transporter and arginine vasopressin receptor 1a.

Both genes are involved in the transmission of information between nerve cells. The serotonin transporter regulates the level of serotonin, a brain transmitter that influences many behavioral traits. The vasopressin receptor has been shown to modulate social communication and affiliated bonding behaviors. Both are elements involved in dancing.

The research is published in the journal *Public Library of Science Genetics*.

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