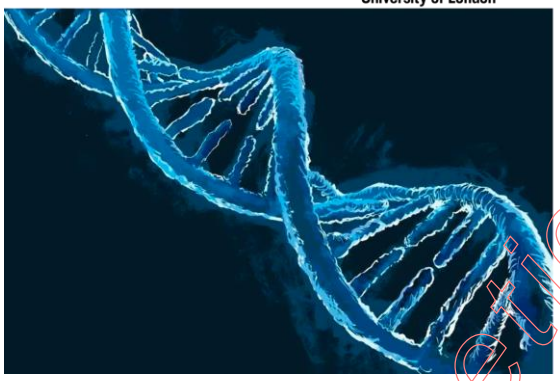
Genetic Science Spotlight

Imperial College and Queen Mary University London:
107 New Genes Associated With High Blood Pressure Discovered



Scientists from Imperial College London and Queen Mary University of London have identified 107 new genes which are involved in blood pressure regulation. Hypertension affects around over 1 billion individuals and is a leading risk factor for heart disease, stroke and death worldwide. It is caused by a complex interplay between genetics and lifestyle factors such as diet, weight, alcohol consumption, and physical activity. The researchers tested 9.8 million genetic variants from 420,000 participants to identify the 107 genes. They developed a risk score based on these genes, and demonstrated that the higher a person's risk score, the higher their blood pressure and the higher their risk of heart disease and stroke – especially for people aged over 50. These significant findings, published in Nature Genetic, could lead to a better understanding of how high blood pressure develops and lead to change in the way it is prevented and treated. This new information brings new opportunities to develop better therapeutics to treat high blood pressure and also to more accurately identify individuals at an earlier age who may be at increased risk from high blood pressure. This would mean healthcare professionals could make sure those individuals get the right advice or treatment to keep their blood pressure under control, lowering their risk of heart disease and stroke.

http://www.nature.com/ng/journal/v49/n3/full/ng.3768.html?foxtrotcallback=true

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