

“Is There a Genetic Component to Homosexuality?”

Dear Dr. Bohlin,

I noticed that you have some background in genetics. I am writing an article involving homosexuality for my own website. Many homosexuals want to say they are “born” that way, or that God made them homosexual. However, the evidence so far is unconvincing.

I am a student of science and scientific knowledge and have some background in science as well. I believe that there may be a genetic component to what some homosexuals experience.

Also, I’ve been thinking that some homosexuals may have a genetic defect somewhere that we may discover. They may not want to hear or believe this, but I think it is a possibility. They don’t seem to realize that just because they may be “born” homosexual does not mean that they were meant to be homosexual. For example, some are born with sickle-cell anemia, but we know that this is due to a genetic defect and that this is abnormal for red blood cells. This is a problem that needs to be fixed. I think we may find in the genetic code a defect that leads some to homosexuality. I purposely used the word “some” in my statements because I think it is pretty well established by now that homosexuality is not a monolith and that some of them do choose this lifestyle deliberately. So what do you think?

No one has identified any gene that has been linked to homosexuality. Dean Hamer reportedly found a chromosomal region that was prevalent in male homosexuals but his work was unrepeatable and has been largely discarded.

It certainly is possible that there may be a gene or sets of genes that predispose someone to homosexuality. But you correctly surmise that this in no way would determine homosexual behavior. We all probably have genetic predispositions of one sort or another that make it easier for us to sin in some areas than in others. This could be similar to suspected predispositions for some to alcoholism (as found in some races and ethnic groups). This does not mean their alcoholism is excused or acceptable. The same would be true of any predisposition to homosexuality.

Keep in mind also that many who desire to leave the homosexual lifestyle can and do, and many have successfully worked to change their romantic and sexual attractions. If it were in any way genetically determined, this would not be possible. It would be like choosing to have genetically blue eyes and blonde hair (hair coloring and colored contact lenses aside).

Also, many in the gay community are distancing themselves from any genetic component to homosexuality because that would mean a genetic test could eventually be developed for it. They know full well that many parents would likely choose to have any embryo/fetus testing positive for homosexuality to be aborted or simply not implanted in the case of IVF.

Respectfully,

Ray Bohlin, PhD
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