

Male-to-Female Transsexualism Gene Found

Emma Young / NewScientist.com news service
12:59 27 October 2008

A gene linked to male-to-female transsexualism has been uncovered by Australian researchers. Following a [similar finding for female-to-male transsexuals](#) announced in July, the work strengthens the idea that transsexualism has a biological basis.

The study of 112 male-to-female volunteers -- the biggest of its kind to date -- found that they were more likely than normal males to have a long version of a gene that helps testosterone bind to cells which could reduce its effects in the body.

The biological bases for gender identity are largely unknown, "but we could speculate that [effective] testosterone signalling is required for male gender identity", says [Vincent Harley](#) at Prince Henry's Institute for Medical Research at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia who led the work. "This signaling is weakened in male-to-female transsexuals, leading to decreased masculinization of their brains".

Andrew Sinclair -- director of early development and disease at the [Murdoch Childrens Research Institute](#) in Melbourne -- agrees.

The work "supports the notion that transsexualism has a biological basis rather than being due to psychosocial factors in early childhood," he says. "However, the finding does not explain all male-to-female transsexuals, suggesting that multiple genetic factors are involved."

While the genetic link was statistically significant, it was weak. 55% of the transsexuals had the long version of the gene compared with 50% of normal men. Harley agrees that many more genes related to male-to-female transsexualism probably remain to be discovered.

A better understanding of this would also help in assigning sex to children born with ambiguous genitalia which is a much more common condition than transsexualism, Harley says.

Journal reference: [Biological Psychiatry](#) (in press)

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Lawyer Killed in Alleged S&M Triangle

Police: David Krieg killed Manhattan lawyer Anthony Ottavio
ABC News / Dec. 5, 2008

A former doctoral student who allegedly moonlighted as a dominatrix named "Jade Vixen" was at the center of an apparent love triangle that ended in the murder of her boyfriend who was a lawyer at a prestigious Manhattan law firm according to police sources and media reports.

Philadelphia police said David Krieg, 42, shot and killed Anthony Ottaviano on Monday night after waiting outside Ottaviano's girlfriend's Philadelphia apartment.

Krieg followed the pair into the building's parking garage, police said. Then he shot Ottaviano and kidnapped his girlfriend who was identified by the New York Post as Edythe Maa, a former University of Pennsylvania Ph.D student who reportedly moonlights as dominatrix named "Jade Vixen". Krieg released Maa who then called police later that night, police added.

Krieg killed himself the next morning after a 9-hour standoff with West Chester, Pa. police, said police Lt. William Morris. Morris said Krieg led police on a brief chase after they attempted to pull him over. When officers approached his car, he allegedly held a gun to his head and threatened to commit suicide.

Maa could not be reached for comment Thursday. A MySpace page for Jade Vixen said she is "brokenheartedly dreaming of a beautiful future never to come" and described her mood as "numb".

Jack Baughman -- a partner at Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton, and Garrison where Ottaviano worked -- called him "a good colleague. He was a nice, hardworking, honest person. People liked working with him and they liked him as a peer."

"It's a tragedy what happened," Baughman said.

According to the Post, Ottaviano (40) and Maa "partied together at kinky New York City fetish parties sometimes with him wearing lipstick, a garter belt, stockings, and high heels."

The exact nature of the relationship between Krieg and Maa was unclear, though the Post described him as a former client and a rival for her attention.

In one online post, Krieg identified "Jade Vixen" as Edyth Maa and gave an address and cell phone number.



Anthony Ottaviano (left) and Edythe Maa (otherwise known as "Jade Vixen") attend the Santos Party House Nov. 15, 2008 in New York.

