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Religious People Live Healthier, Longer Lives -

While Atheists Collect Mutant Genes

By Katherine Hignett

*Religious people tend to live healthier, longer lives than atheists. This trend has puzzled academics for some time, but social scientists may have discovered the reason why.*

Katherine, let me take a stab at it:

You are comparing two groups of people. In the first group are the vast majority. They control the government, and therefore, access to most of the resources. They are notorious for their tribal mentality, bigotry, and hate towards anyone who will not submit to their domination, especially other religious believers.

The other group, atheists, existed until very recently, “*in the closet*.” Hence the old saying: “*An agnostic is simply an atheist ... with a wife and kids*.” That saying tells you way more about religious people than it does about nonbelievers.

So my question is ... Why the surprise?

And a follow-up question: What other outcome could you expect?

If Ghost Worshipers didn’t kill you, they made you wish they had.

*Lead author Edward Dutton from the Ulster Institute for Social Research explained the research to Newsweek. He says: “Maybe the positive relationship between religiousness and health is not causal—it's not that being religious makes you less stressed so less ill. Rather, religious people are a genetically normal remnant population from preindustrial times, and the rest of us are mutants who'd have died as children back then.”*

Edward, then how do you explain the religious people who were once the mutants when religious belief first began to flourish?

How come they didn’t die out?

*Changing societal norms are reflected in our genetics. According to natural selection, behaviors across a species will work to improve its survival chances. Social deviations, therefore, are sometimes associated with unfit genetic mutations.*

Katherine, do you have any evidence that the first humans were religious?

Proceeding on the assumption that you do not, religion would have been a “social deviation.” In that case, are you asserting that religious belief was one of those deviations that was *not* associated with an unfit genetic mutation?

If not, then is it your position that religious belief is an unfit genetic mutation that persisted?

*Since the industrial revolution, the hold of natural selection on humanity has weakened. “We developed better and better medical care, easier access to healthy food and better living conditions. Child mortality collapsed down to a tiny level and more and more people with more and more mutant genes have survived into adulthood and had children,” Dutton says.*

Edward, what is it about those mutant genes that bothers you so much? Are you assuming they are all bad?

Remember, without those mutations, humans would still be climbing around in trees looking for little bugs to eat.

*Atheism—which was once a deviation from the norm—is becoming more and more common. As it becomes normal, the burden of associated unfit genes could grow.*

Katherine, why do you ignore all the advances science is making in gene therapy using new tools like CRISPR? Why do you ignore the fact that not all mutations are deleterious?

And how about all the millions of people not being killed for religious reasons? Do you see that as a bad thing because it allows more unfit genes to get passed on?

*Dutton and colleagues tested for left-handedness among religious people and atheists. Left-handedness is a good marker of a high mutational load.*

Katherine, you should have troubled yourself to do a little research before blindly accepting assertions like that. Here is one example of what you might have found, had you tried ...

<http://www.iflscience.com/brain/finally-know-people-left-righthanded/>

“... *it’s not influenced by regular, inherited genetic mutations or traits, but by environmental factors – influences that are affecting the baby as it grows in the womb*.”

Katherine, I had no difficulty locating that scientific study. You seem awfully lazy for a journalist.

*They found higher levels of left-handedness in atheists than in followers of most major religions.*

Katherine, they also found higher levels of education and intelligence:

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2017/05/170517101208.htm>

and superior morals such as altruism:

<https://news.uchicago.edu/article/2015/11/05/religious-upbringing-associated-less-altruism-study-finds>

and generosity:

<http://news.berkeley.edu/2012/04/30/religionandgenerosity/>

You kinda forgot to mention anything like that in your article.

And that first article above (on intelligence) was authored by ...

Edward Dutton (yes, the same Edward Dutton).

*Explaining the behavior behind these results, Dutton says: “Religiousness makes you more pro-social,*

Edward, you forgot to specify: pro-social *towards the tribe*.

I would not grant that their increased social ability extends much beyond that – at least not according to their long, bloody, brutal history.

*Religious people would have been sexually selected for because their pro-social, moral, unstressed nature would be attractive.”*

Edward, not being targeted by the majority and marked for expulsion or death would have also been an attractive feature.

And what do you mean by “moral” nature?

What part of slavery do you find “moral?”

Which one of those Bible Belt lynchings (of the thousands) do you find “moral?”

Where do you find morality in the killing of millions of original Americans because they were too weak to defend themselves against invading hordes of European Christians?

*The authors argue that certain kinds of religious belief involving the worship of moral gods can thrive as societies develop.*

Katherine, if you are defining a moral god as one who supports, demands, or practices slavery, genocide, genital mutilation, human and animal sacrifice, and a host of other subhuman atrocities, then ... have I got a God for you.

By the way, could you list the religions that worship “moral gods?” And if you still have some time, could you also list societies that have thrived – so that we can try to match them up?

*“Once groups become relatively complex—developing farming and then cities—you find yourself dealing with strangers more and more,” Dutton says.*

*Holding similar moral beliefs gives individuals an incentive to mingle—and reproduce—with new people.*

Katherine, in the case of the Indians, I don’t think the invading hordes of Christians cared much about what the Indians believed. What they cared about was the resource-rich land that the Indians were sitting on.

It sure is a good thing that all those invading Christians worshipped a moral god and obeyed commandments like “*Thou shalt not kill*.”

Who knows what fate would have awaited the Indians if those Christians had lacked a moral god to guide them?

*This creates large “ethnocentric” groups, bound by religion, who come to dominate others. “They win the wars and kill off the other groups,” Dutton explains.*

Edward, you’re doing great!

I think I’ll just sit back and let you finish this for me.

*As selection against mutation becomes less intense, the indirect selection for religiousness also becomes less frequent. Dutton tells Newsweek,“Precisely because it was selected for so long it is associated with all the 'normal' instincts which were selected for in the past. Accordingly, while the religious are outbreeding the non-religious—but, their percentage of the population is shrinking because selection is so weak.”*

Edward, I knew I shouldn’t have left you alone. Now you’ve started with the assertions again. You assumed that Ghost Worshiper numbers are shrinking because of weaker selection, while ignoring the possibility that evolution is weeding out the delusional, child-like minds of the gullible who find it harder to compete in a modern world where their ability to kill and physically dominate outsiders is diminishing rapidly.

*Earlier this year, Dutton and colleagues identified a link between intelligence and atheism. He predicts that, in the end, intelligence and atheism will be both undone by a gradual return to natural selection.*

Katherine, they got that one right. In fact, that process is already happening worldwide. The most obvious evidence that Dutton and colleagues are correct is Trump’s election which sent America into a “post-truth, alternative facts” world where black is now white, and if you disagree with that, you are an unpatriotic Tweet target.

*Dutton explains: “We will be taken over by a more religious society which is more ethnocentric than us.”*

Edward, that is already happening ... America is becoming great again.

*“In that our intelligence is decreasing,”*

Edward, IQ’s have increased about 30 points in the last century. So my question is – what measure are *you* using for intelligence?

*“I suspect civilization will go backwards,”*

Edward, you don’t have to suspect – it is already in progress ...

and accelerating.

*“Natural selection will return and we will become more religious once more. This seems to be a rule of history.”*

Edward, you give up too easily. You have ignored many factors that weigh against your hypothesis. Counterforces are organizing and mobilizing ... as you write.

It may not be as easy for Ghost Worshipers ... as it used to be.

<http://www.newsweek.com/religion-healthy-atheism-mutant-genes-756984>

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THE SCIENCE SEGMENT

Brain cells found to control aging

The hypothalamus was known to regulate important processes including growth, development, reproduction, and metabolism. In 2013, researchers made the surprising finding that the hypothalamus also regulates aging throughout the body. Now, the scientists have pinpointed the cells in the hypothalamus that control aging: a tiny population of adult neural stem cells, which were known to be responsible for forming new brain neurons.

The number of hypothalamic neural stem cells naturally declines over the life of the animal, and this decline accelerates aging. But they also found that the effects of this loss are not irreversible. By replenishing these stem cells, or the molecules they produce, it's possible to slow and even reverse various aspects of aging throughout the body.

Researchers first looked at the fate of those cells as healthy mice got older. The number of hypothalamic stem cells began to diminish when the animals reached about 10 months, which is several months before the usual signs of aging start appearing. By old age (about two years of age in mice) most of those cells were gone.

The researchers next wanted to learn whether this progressive loss of stem cells was actually causing aging and was not just associated with it. So they observed what happened when they selectively disrupted the hypothalamic stem cells in middle-aged mice. This disruption greatly accelerated aging compared with control mice, and those animals with disrupted stem cells died earlier than normal.

Could adding stem cells to the hypothalamus counteract aging?

Researchers found that the hypothalamic stem cells appear to exert their anti-aging effects by releasing molecules called microRNAs. They are not involved in protein synthesis but instead play key roles in regulating gene expression. microRNAs are packaged inside tiny particles called exosomes, which hypothalamic stem cells release into the cerebrospinal fluid of mice.

The researchers extracted microRNA-containing exosomes from hypothalamic stem cells and injected them into the cerebrospinal fluid of two groups of mice: middle-aged mice whose hypothalamic stem cells had been destroyed and normal middle-aged mice. This treatment significantly slowed aging in both groups of animals as measured by tissue analysis and behavioral testing that involved assessing changes in the animals' muscle endurance, coordination, social behavior and cognitive ability.

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FAMOUS QUOTES

Jeffrey Tayler

(no biography – previously quoted)

"All religions are nothing more

than man-made contrivances of domination and submission,

exploited by humans for mundane ends,

and accoutered with sundry superstitious rituals

meant to ensure tribal loyalty

and generate animosity toward outsiders."