

Is Alcoholism Genetic?

admin · Friday, May 2nd, 2008



Genetics influence alcoholism. Genetic research is making progress in identifying the genes that increase the probability of alcohol dependence. Alcoholism commonly runs in the family, but environmental factors such as levels of conflict, emotional abuse and ease of access to alcohol make it difficult to determine what is the major factor in developing an alcohol dependency. Addressing social issues may protect people with a genetic tendency to engage in alcohol abuse.

Genetics are not the only determining factor in alcoholism. A person from a family with no history of alcohol dependency may suddenly develop it. Psychological stress may have a greater influence on behavior than genetic predisposition.

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