

Being nice may be in your genes, according to study

April 18, 2012

CBS News:

Being a nice person isn't just because of how your mother raised you: It might be coded into your genes.

A new study, out in the April issue of *Psychological Science*, shows that people who have certain types of oxytocin and vasopressin receptor genes were more likely to be generous when coupled with that person's outlook on the world.

Past research has shown that oxytocin and vasopressin promote more charitable behavior. Oxytocin has even been called the "love drug" or the "cuddle chemical" and has been known to create mothering behavior, according to Dr. Michel Poulin, professor of psychology at the University of Buffalo, who led the study. The study also pointed out that oxytocin can influence generosity in economic ways, as well as increase empathy and improve interactions with close people. Vasopressin has also been tied to making people more economically generous and make men more likely to bond with another person.

For the study, Poulin's team administered an online survey about an individual's attitude toward civic duty, other people, charitable activities, and the world at large. Then saliva samples were taken from 711 subjects to see what version of the oxytocin and vasopressin receptor genes they had.

Read the whole story: [CBS News](#)