

# Genes play a role in the likelihood of divorce

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THAT the children of divorced parents are more likely, when they grow up, to get divorced themselves is well known. What is not known is how much this tendency is the result of nurture (with children manifesting, in later life, behaviours learned from their parents), and how much it is caused by nature (with children inheriting from divorced parents the sorts of genes that lead to marriage-breaking behaviour). That genes are important has, though, now been confirmed by a study published in *Psychological Science* by Jessica Salvatore and Kenneth Kendler of the Virginia Institute for Psychiatric and Behavioural Genetics.

To explore the role of genes Dr Salvatore and Dr Kendler turned to the Swedish national registries. These databases store, for all residents of Sweden, information on sex, year of birth, year of death, marital status, criminal activity, education and alcohol abuse. They also contain details of both the biological and the adoptive parents of adopted children.