

HUMOR

Science project

Is being gay genetic or prophetic?

I'm so proud. Right here in Portland, researchers at Oregon Health & Science University have discovered that the brains of gay male sheep differ slightly from those of straight male sheep. Although, when you consider how stupid sheep are, it's amazing they could tell the difference.

But, apparently, it's not that difficult to tell which sheep are gay and which are not: For starters, straight sheep say "Baaah" while gay sheep say "Baaah-bra." When in doubt, researchers let the sheep pick out window treatments and then drew conclusions from there.

The whole brain thing doesn't surprise me at all. Back in 1992, a study showed that gay men have larger clumps of nerve cells connecting the left and right hemispheres of the brain, an area I like to call the "Garland Gland."

Some argue that increased communication between the hemispheres enhances creativity. This would explain why, in a 2001 study in which men measured their own penises, gay men reported longer lengths than straights—and proves you can't always trust those AOL profiles either.

(In other penis news, last year researchers at St. Mary's Hospital in Great Britain concluded that no correlation exists between penis size and shoe size. As interesting as this may be, it does make one wonder why a British man would wear a shoe on his penis.)

At the root of all these studies, however, is the question of whether homosexuality is a choice. Happily, there is growing evidence to confirm what most of us have instinctively known all our lives: We're simply made this way.

A number of scientists seem to think we're gay because of our hormones. For instance, one study using rats points to a relationship between stress during pregnancy and irregular

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARC
by Marc Acito



hormonal levels. I've got to admit I don't really understand how that works. I know the way to make a hormone is to stick a finger up his bum, but how exactly does one go about stressing a rat? Take it to the DMV?

As for lesbians, a study done at University of Texas in Austin showed that gay women may have more testosterone than straight women. Researchers came to this conclusion when they discovered that, like men, lesbians have weaker inner ear cells. Put another way, lesbians just don't hear as well, which goes a long way toward explaining why they can tolerate so much folk music.

A University of California study claims that lesbians also have "masculine" right hands, in which the ring finger is longer than the pointer finger. In a related story, lovers of long-fingered California lesbians reported a higher rate of sexual satisfaction.

Some of the most compelling evidence for biological causes, however, are the genetic studies. I read about one that proved gay men actually have less subcutaneous fat than straight men.

Apparently we can fit into our designer jeans because of our designer genes. And we also have lower creatine levels, which proves that gym rats don't take supplements for vanity's sake; we need this stuff like Whitney Houston needs a crack pipe and a sandwich.

One experiment showed that the introduction of a certain gene caused fruit flies (yes, you read that right) to exhibit homosexual behaviors. I'm guessing that means the lesbian flies would only land on organic produce while the gay ones cheerfully flitted from fruit to fruit.

The studies of twins are perhaps the most intriguing. For instance, fraternal twins who are carried in the same womb and reared in the same household have a 1-in-4 chance of being gay, while identical twins have a 1-in-2 chance of being gay.

And if two gay twins leave Detroit at the same time, one heading to Provincetown at 60 miles per hour, the other to Key West at 75 miles



per hour, one thing is certain: Both of them will get laid while on vacation. Isn't science cool? Some argue that once it's proven homosexuality is genetic, it will mean the end of discrimination. My concern is that once it's proven homosexuality is genetic, it will also mean the end of homo-

sexuality. If scientists know what causes queerness, they might also eradicate it. And I'm not sure I want to live in a world without Lyca and John Waters movies.

But the issue of whether being gay is a choice is completely irrelevant to the issue of civil rights. After all, religion is a choice, and it's a protected right.

If I choose to worship Jeff Stryker, I should be allowed to. And if someone really thinks being queer is so cool they actually choose to be gay, I say jump in—there's plenty of room to splash in our gene pool.

And that, my friends, is The Gospel According to Marc. ☐
MARC ACITO would like to apologize in advance to any scientists, sheep or fruit flies he may have offended. Write him at marcacito@attbi.com.

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