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A study at the University of Minnesota tests the personality traits and intelligence levels of twins who were separated at birth. They sought to discover whether genetics or environment is more influential in human development.

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**APA**


**CHICAGO MANUAL OF STYLE**


**Transcript**

Minnesota Twins

TOM BROKAW, co-host:

The Minnesota Twins. Not the championship baseball team, but a study by researchers at the University of Minnesota of identical twins who were raised apart. NBC News science correspondent Robert Bezel reports tonight that the study seems to show that intelligence and other traits are affected less by environment than by heredity.

ROBERT BEZEL, co-host:

Lucky Collins and Diane Clark are identical twins. They were given up for adoption at birth and they did not meet for 42 years.

Such pairs of twins raised apart are rare. They have been the key to a research project at the University of Minnesota, which focuses on one of the most crucial questions about human behavior: How much of what we are is determined by genetics? That is what we inherit from our parents. And how much by the environment in which we are raised? Identical twins inherit the same genes from their parents. For those raised in different homes, differences should be due to environment, similarities to genetics.

Dr. THOMAS BOUCHARD: It became apparent just from working with the twins right away that it was just a lot of similarity across all kinds of behavioral characteristics. I started to suspect that maybe they are going to show a genetic effect on everything, and that’s more or less what happened.

BEZEL: Dr. Thomas Bouchard and his colleagues began his studies with the Jim twins. Jim Springer and Jim Lewis. Before rediscovering each other, they had a remarkable set of coincidences in their lives. They had married wives with the same name, divorced and married second wives with the same name. They had given their sons similar names and their dog the same name and they had acquired similar hobbies, homes and jobs. These sort of coincidences appeared in other sets of twins reared apart. Jack Yufe was raised in America as a Jew, while his twin Oskar Stohr had been a member of Hitler youth in Germany. Yet the twins shared a wide range of habits and personality traits. Twins who had never seen each other wore the same styles, did things the same way, shared the same tastes.
UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN: Do you like the same kinds of beer?
UNIDENTIFIED MALE TWINS: Budweiser.

BEZEL: Some even giggled the same. The research moved quickly from observation of coincidences to exhaustive tests of the twins. Physical, but more important psychological. What the Minnesota scientists investigated is not just about twins. It works with basic information about all of us. The scientists administered tests for a wide range of characteristics, including the most crucial and by far the most controversial. Intelligence.

Dr. BOUCHARD: There’s a very significant and powerful genetic effect on intelligence. It’s even larger than for personality. Our data, and I’d like to leave some range to it, suggests that the amount of variation explained by genetic factors is somewhere between 50 and 70%, which is really a significant amount.

BEZEL: Eight years ago when the researchers here at the University of Minnesota began their study, the idea that heredity played such a powerful role was controversial. The prevailing view was that the environment, in which we are raised, is far more important in determining how we are and how we behave.

Some critics of the Minnesota study have said that the conclusion could be used as a justification for ending social welfare programs such as Head Start, which offers early education for disadvantaged children. Bouchard strongly disagrees.

BOUCHARD: So I think we should engage in Head Start programs. I think we should engage in all kinds of recruitments for education. I think we can make kids smarter, we can make their lives better. One of the things we are—probably not be able to do however, is make everybody the same.

BEZEL: The Minnesota scientists acknowledge that almost all of their twins have been white and raised in middle-class homes. They say that for children raised in poverty, the environment could play a strong role in lowering intelligence.

Dr. DAVID LYKKEN: In fact we know some methods of decreasing IQ. We can raise every child in a dark closet and then his IQ is going to be very low because he doesn’t have the necessary experiences growing up that make IQ come and make it blossom.

BEZEL: The Minnesota research remains controversial. Most of it has yet to be published for other scientists to consider, but researchers believe the twins studies will prove a roll for genetics in most human behavior. Robert Bezel, NBC-NEWS Minneapolis.