

Gentic

Science, Biology



The Jewish legacy inscribed on genes The article “ The Jewish legacy inscribed on genes?” by Karen Kaplan expounds on the findings of Gregory Cochran Henry Harpending. According to it, the Europeans Jews are well known of suffering from deadly genetic diseases that play a significant role towards their high IQ. In it, it provides detailed information on how Cochran found it hard to understand why the natural selection principle by Darwin did not take part in eliminating the dangerous genes from a Jew’s gene pool. However, it also expounds on how Cochran justified the occurrence of the genes by claiming that maybe they had some added advantage in humans (Kaplan 1). In tandem to his idea, scientists also related human behaviors such as aggression and addiction to the information written in human genes. Just like Cochran, they also failed to understand why some people proved smarter than others. Unfortunately, they also found it hard to research on the causes of the variation because of racism ideas that were to crop from. To justify their opinion that Europeans have high brain power, Cochran and Harpending decided to carry out research. In their study, they found out that the Jews are among the least population in America that has received many Nobel prizes awards since 1950. Additionally, they found out that people easily agreed that there is variation in height among groups of people but failed to agree with the variation in smartness. According to them, variation in individuals’ smartness was a reality that needed to be accepted. Most people disagreed with Cochran’s ideas probably because they knew him as a physicist Ph. D. holder. Additionally, he might have confused people further by claiming that some pathogens led to young children becoming gay. However, he might have gotten his understanding of genetics from not

only working with an evolutionary biologist, but also from reading 15 genetics books (Kaplan 4).

Cochran is known of coming up with three diseases that affect Jewish children. For instance, he argued that Tay-Sachs disease is a neurological disorder that incapacitates children of the age 4 and below before killing them. According to him, Canavan disease is a brain disease that turned the brain into the sponge and killed the children before joining the kindergarten. On the other hand, he argued that Niemann-Pick disease type A led to the accumulation of fats in vital organs of young children leading to brain damage. Cochran also found out that there are many diseases that hampered with sphingolipids processing. However, he also found out that Ashkenzi Jews had less than one gene associated with sphingolipid in 100,000 genes he isolated in each Jew.

To justify the occurrence of one gene that associated with the sphingolipid, Cochran and Harpending argued that it had heterozygous advantage. Its presence led to the Jews having high IQ; it acted as an IQ boost (Kaplan 5). Although Cochran and Harpending managed to come with an explanation on why the Jews are smarter than any race in the world, it is apparent that their study did not provide detailed information on how the genes associated with the diseases that kill Jewish children disappeared in adulthood. Additionally, it is evident that their study only involved young children who were to die within the age of four. From this, it is evident their study did not have any correlation with the life and success of adult Jews. From the article, it is also evident that Cochran was a physicist by profession. Thus, his source of information and ideas could be biased or inadequate to justify that the

serious diseases that lead to the death of young children contribute to the high IQ of the Jews.

Works Cited

Kaplan, Karen. " Jewish legacy inscribed on genes?" Los Angeles Times. 2009. Print.