Introduction

This summer I completed work at Massachusetts General Hospital. I was able to interview a dozen researchers, clinicians, Professors, and doctors about the topics of my thesis on creativity, evolution, and bipolar disorder. I completed a presentation on the topic.

Reflection

- **Antagonistic pleiotropy** brings together the idea that advantageous alleles, such as creativity, might be carried along with the risk for bipolar disorder.
- Some traits such as the risk taking trait in bipolar disorder might be adaptive.
- There is a considered link between mental illness and creativity.
- However, it is impossible to test this for this in certainty.
- There are population studies and case studies that point to a correlation.
- Some argue the evidence is too slim.

Objective of Study

I wanted to learn about the science of how bipolar disorder and how the illness has persisted in the gene pool over time.

Methods

- Interviewed a dozen researchers.
- Shadowed doctors.
- Examined patient data in a study looking at a prolonged exposure in patients with PTSD and bipolar disorder.
- Organized the screening order of psychological tests in the study.
- I also spoke with art therapists, patients with mood disorders who are creativity, and a Professor in the history of psychiatry to learn more about evolution, creativity, and mental illness.
- I learned how to integrate the different parts of my thesis into a comprehensive whole.

Discussion

- Understanding evolution in the context of bipolar disorder could help us understand why bipolar disorder is genetically passed on through generations.
- Additional research can help us understand the genetics.

Questions

- What are the genetics behind how bipolar has persisted over time?
- How is a polygenic risk score assessed and used?
- Are there any mechanisms consider evolution and bipolar disorder to consider?

Conclusion

- There is a relationship between mental illness and creativity that keep it in the gene pool.
- There are advantage traits that remain through generations.

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