



## Twin studies used to prove that the comorbidity of major depressive disorder with IBS is NOT influenced by heredity.

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Source: Am J Gastroenterol. 2007 Oct;102(10):2230-1  
Date: Oct-2007  
Language: English  
Publication Type: Article  
Keywords: Depressive Disorder, Major - complications - epidemiology - genetics  
Humans  
Irritable Bowel Syndrome - epidemiology - genetics - psychology  
Reproducibility of Results  
Research Design  
Sweden - epidemiology  
Twin Studies as Topic  
Twins, Dizygotic  
Twins, Monozygotic

Abstract: Twin studies have traditionally been used to assess the heritability of diseases such as irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) by comparing concordance rates in monozygotic twins (identical genetic endowment) to dizygotic twins (half of genes shared). Wojczynski et al. used twins in a novel way-they studied monozygotic twins who were discordant for IBS (but who shared identical genes) to show that the comorbidity of IBS with major depressive disorder could NOT be due to genetic influences. This paradigm provides the most rigorous method for separating genetic from environmental influences and should be adopted by other researchers. However, the authors' conclusion that major depressive disorder and IBS are part of the same pathophysiological process is questioned on the basis of (a) incomplete co-occurrence of IBS and major depressive disorder (13-45% co-occurrence) and (b) lack of specificity-the authors show that chronic widespread pain (related to fibromyalgia) and chronic fatigue are also strongly associated with IBS. This study provides precise, generalizable estimates from a large population-based study for the comorbidity of IBS with major depressive disorder, chronic widespread pain, and chronic fatigue.

Notes: Comment On: Am J Gastroenterol. 2007 Oct;102(10):2220-917897337

PubMed ID: 17897338 [View in PubMed](#)