



## **New Study in Nature Human Behavior Shows Spouses Often Share Psychiatric Disorders Across Cultures and Generations**

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A groundbreaking international study published in Nature Human Behavior reveals that psychiatric disorders frequently occur in both partners of married couples—and this pattern has held steady across cultures and generations.

Researchers analyzed data from more than 5 million couples in Taiwan, alongside national registries from Denmark and Sweden, making this the largest study of its kind. The findings show that spouses often share diagnoses such as major depressive disorder, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and substance use disorders more often than would be expected by chance.

“These patterns are remarkably consistent across very different societies and have persisted for nearly a century,” said Dr. Fan, Principal Investigator, LIBR. “This suggests that spousal similarities play a significant role in how psychiatric disorders are passed down through generations and how they spread within populations.”

### ***Key Findings:***

- **Spousal overlap is common:** Partners with psychiatric disorders are significantly more likely to marry someone with a similar diagnosis than those without.
- **Cross-cultural consistency:** The patterns were nearly identical across Taiwan and Nordic countries, despite major cultural differences.
- **Generational persistence:** From the 1930s to the 1990s, most psychiatric disorders showed stable or even increasing spousal correlations over time.
- **Impact on families:** Children with two parents sharing the same disorder often had double the risk compared to children with one affected parent.

These results highlight how non-random mating influences the prevalence, inheritance, and co-occurrence of psychiatric conditions. The research underscores the importance of accounting for spousal similarities in future genetic and public health studies of mental illness.

The full study is available in Nature Human Behavior, [here](#).

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