

**News and Current Events :: Oh the folly of mans wisdom**

Oh the folly of mans wisdom - posted by TomfromOZ, on: 2012/11/14 16:57

Gday all

This article was posted in the sydney morning herald:

Researchers have discovered a new gene they say helps explain how humans evolved from chimpanzees.

The gene, called miR-941, appears to have played a crucial role in human brain development and could shed light on how we learned to use tools and language, according to scientists.

A team at the University of Edinburgh compared it to 11 other species of mammals, including chimpanzees, gorillas, mice and rats.

The results, published in Nature Communications, showed that the gene is unique to humans.

Advertisement The team believe it emerged between six and one million years ago, after humans evolved from apes.

Researchers said it is the first time a new gene carried by humans and not by apes has been shown to have a specific function in the human body.

Martin Taylor, who led the study at the Institute of Genetics and Molecular Medicine at the University of Edinburgh, said: "As a species, humans are wonderfully inventive - we are socially and technologically evolving all the time.

"But this research shows that we are innovating at a genetic level too.

"This new molecule sprang from nowhere at a time when our species was undergoing dramatic changes: living longer, walking upright, learning how to use tools and how to communicate.

"We're now hopeful that we will find more new genes that help show what makes us human."

The gene is highly active in two areas of the brain, controlling decision-making and language abilities, with the study suggesting it could have a role in the advanced brain functions that make us human.

It is known that most differences between species occur as a result of changes to existing genes, or the duplication and deletion of genes.

But, according to scientists, this gene emerged fully functional out of non-coding genetic material, previously termed "junk DNA", in a brief interval of evolutionary time.

They said that, until now, it has been difficult to see this process in action.

Read more: <http://www.smh.com.au/technology/sci-tech/what-made-us-human-unique-evolution-gene-found-20121115-29d9p.html#ixzz2CEi7cGuz>

We are fearfully and wonderfully made, praise the Lord for his wisdom, His ways are beyond finding out. >