

Do our genes 'remember' pain?

By Amy Ellis Nutt, Washington Post

You pulled a muscle in your back carrying groceries, took a shot to the shin in flag football or suffer from fibromyalgia. But it's months later, and the lower back still aches, the leg still throbs, the body remains tender to the slightest insult. Welcome to the club of chronic pain.

Scientists have long thought that an overly sensitive nervous system is the culprit behind chronic pain. But how and why does it stay so sensitive over time?

In a recent study published in Cell Reports, researchers at King's College London think they might have found an answer, or at least the beginning of one: Some of the long-term changes that occur with a painful insult appear to be recorded at the molecular level and preserved in some immune-cell genes.

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