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19 July 2014 | News | By BioSpectrum Bureau

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Bangalore: A latest study conducted by researchers from the University of California, San Diego has suggested that friends share DNA similarities.

The study suggest that you may be more similar to your friends than you think. It explains how the DNA code tends to be more alike between friends than between strangers. This, researchers pointed out is beyond the effect of shared ethnicity.

One of the lead researcher Mr James Fowler from the University of California said that this can be important for theories about human evolution.

Mr Fowler, along with Yale researcher Mr Nicholas Christakis presented their findings in a paper that was released by the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

The research included 1,932 participants in a long-running health study in Framingham, Massachusetts. A report explained that the researchers knew who was close friends with whom from the 1970s to the early 2000s because of information gathered for the study.

From this group, they identified 1,367 pairs of close friends and about 1.2 million pairs of strangers. Then they examined information about nearly 467,000 locations in the DNA code of each participant. They looked for how similar the friend pairs were, and compared that to how similar the stranger pairs were.

One of the first observation that the researchers made was that genes affecting sense of smell were especially likely to be similar in friends.

When questioned about why friends would have more DNA similarities than strangers, Mr Fowler said, "One possibility is that similar genes nudge people toward similar environments, which then gives them a chance to meet. Another possibility is that people who share certain genes also share skills that become more valuable when the people work together."

This, he added could have been important over evolutionary time, setting up a pattern that people still follow.

Mr Fowler also pointed out that it's not clear whether the finding pertains to groups outside of the Framingham study group, which is overwhelmingly Irish and Italian.

In any case, findings of DNA similarities between friends could help explain how behaviors like altruism developed over evolutionary time, he said.