

SoylentNews is people

IQ Scores Consistently Dropping Since the 1970s

posted by [cmn32480](#) on Thursday June 14, @08:04AM
from the [tv-and-video-games-cause-brain-rot](#) dept.

[JoeMerchant](#) writes:



A Norwegian study published Monday [found a seven-point dip](#) in IQ test scores per generation among men born from 1962 to 1991. The results suggest a reversal in the Flynn effect, an observed increase in IQ scores throughout the 20th century in developed countries.

Coverage from [The Week](#) adds:

The reasons for the Flynn effect and its apparent reversal are disputed. "Scientists have put the rise in IQ down to better teaching, nutrition, healthcare and even artificial lighting," says The Times.

But "it is also possible that the nature of intelligence is changing in the digital age and cannot be captured with traditional IQ tests", adds the newspaper.

"Take 14-year-olds in Britain. What 25% could do back in 1994, now only 5% can do," Shayer added, citing maths and science tests.

More from [The Daily Mail](#):

Two British studies suggested that the fall was between 2.5 and 4.3 points every ten years.

But due to limited research, their results were not widely accepted.

In the latest study Ole Rogeburg and Bernt Bratsberg, of the Ragnar Frisch Centre for Economic Research in Oslo, found that Norwegian men's IQs are lower than the scores of their fathers when they were the same age.

The pair analysed the scores from a standard IQ test of over 730,000 men – who reported for national service between 1970 and 2009.

[Original Submission](#)

(1)

• **We would have understood (Score: 2, Touché) by Anonymous Coward on Thursday June 14, @08:23AM**

by [Anonymous Coward](#) on Thursday June 14, @08:23AM ([#692762](#))

If only this study had been performed 30 years ago, we would have understood the reasons. Alas, our scientists have lost the necessary brain power.

• **Too simple (Score: 3, Interesting) by Arik on Thursday June 14, @08:31AM (11 children)**

by [Arik \(4543\)](#) on Thursday June 14, @08:31AM ([#692765](#)) [Journal](#)

The mean has dropped, what's happened to the standard deviation?

You can't being to make sense of complicated phenomenon based on a single metric, particularly if you don't even understand that!

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"If Evolution Is Outlawed, Only Outlaws Will Evolve."

◦ **Re:Too simple (Score: 4, Touché) by c0lo on Thursday June 14, @08:39AM (9 children)**

by [c0lo \(156\)](#) on Thursday June 14, @08:39AM ([#692767](#))

You can't being to make sense...

It's not *that* complicated.

The main cause for the drop is the excessive and unchecked reliance on autocomplete (large grin)

▪ **Re:Too simple (Score: 1) by Arik on Thursday June 14, @08:48AM**

by [Arik \(4543\)](#) on Thursday June 14, @08:48AM ([#692769](#)) [Journal](#)

Touché, monsieur, touché.

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"If Evolution Is Outlawed, Only Outlaws Will Evolve."

▪ **Re:Too simple (Score: 0, Interesting) by Anonymous Coward on Thursday June 14, @08:54AM (7 children)**

by [Anonymous Coward](#) on Thursday June 14, @08:54AM ([#692773](#))

The main cause for the drop is the excessive and unchecked reliance on autocomplete [immigration](#) [worlddata.info]

Literally correcting autocomplete.

▪ **Re:Too simple (Score: 0) by Anonymous Coward on Thursday June 14, @09:09AM (6 children)**

by [Anonymous Coward](#) on Thursday June 14, @09:09AM ([#692779](#))

Are you implying that IQ tests are affected by cultural differences? So, they don't necessarily measure *intelligence*, but one culture's idea of what intelligence is?

▪ **Re:Too simple (Score: 3, Insightful) by FatPhil on Thursday June 14, @09:23AM (2 children)**

by [FatPhil \(863\)](#) <[pc-soylentNO@SPAMasdf.fi](#)> on Thursday June 14, @09:23AM ([#692783](#)) [Homepage](#)

IQ tests are some of the most deeply studied things in psychology, they're very close to being culturally indifferent. However, if a culture - by accident of design - breeds a population with non-critical minds, and unwillingness to think analytically, then it will of course return a lower median IQ for that population.

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The "free" in #freearistarchus is the "free" in "free jazz"

▪ **Re:Too simple (Score: 2) by maxwell demon on Thursday June 14, @09:31AM**

by [maxwell demon \(1608\)](#) ★ on Thursday June 14, @09:31AM ([#692786](#)) [Journal](#)

Which mean that the IQ test doesn't test your intelligence, but rather your ability to employ critical and/or analytical thinking. Which certainly is *one* aspect of intelligence, but not the only one. Indeed, it is exactly the other aspects of intelligence that make AI a hard problem.

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The Tao of math: The numbers you can count are not the real numbers.

▪ **Re:Too simple (Score: 2) by FatPhil on Thursday June 14, @09:38AM**

by [FatPhil \(863\)](#) <[pc-soylentNO@SPAMasdf.fi](#)> on Thursday June 14, @09:38AM ([#692788](#)) [Homepage](#)

by accident *or* design

accident would be lack of opportunity, design would be deliberately clinging to bronze age attitudes that do not encourage thinking because you think they're superior.

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The "free" in #freearistarchus is the "free" in "free jazz"

▪ **Re:Too simple (Score: 2) by maxwell demon on Thursday June 14, @09:25AM (2 children)**

by [maxwell demon \(1608\)](#) ★ on Thursday June 14, @09:25AM ([#692784](#)) [Journal](#)

Are you implying that IQ tests are affected by cultural differences?

I'm don't know if the parent is implying it, but they [indeed are](#). [sciencedaily.com]

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The Tao of math: The numbers you can count are not the real numbers.

▪ **Re:Too simple (Score: 0) by Anonymous Coward on Thursday June 14, @09:44AM**

by [Anonymous Coward](#) on Thursday June 14, @09:44AM ([#692791](#))

Are you implying that IQ tests are affected by cultural differences?

I'm don't know if the parent is implying it, but they indeed are.

Also [hereditary](#) [sciencedirect.com] but [you already knew that](#) [wikipedia.org]

▪ **Re:Too simple (Score: 2) by choose another one on Thursday June 14, @10:51AM**

by [choose another one \(515\)](#) on Thursday June 14, @10:51AM ([#692809](#))

If genetics affects "intelligence" (as indeed it has been found to: <https://www.nature.com/articles/nrg.2017.104> [nature.com]) then this would be entirely expected since cultural differences are often correlated with gene pool differences. In fact any test that *_doesn't_* show differences between gene pools is probably a poor test of intelligence.

Your study took people originating from different cultures, different languages, different geographical areas, different backgrounds (immigrant and native - it makes a difference to the way you think if you have to be bilingual, requiring one language at home and another outside it) and different gene pools - too many variables.

To determine whether IQ is affected by culture you'd have to test people from the same local gene pools with different cultures - which is tricky because cultures that are very different often don't intermix and therefore the gene pools will differentiate, alternatively, if there is a enough intermixing there is probably not a whole lot of cultural difference. You may be able to get a decent result by looking at places where there has been (recent, in generational terms) large scale religious conversion of only part of the population, for instance.

The (initially) more interesting result in the study you cite was that there was little difference in socioeconomic status between the groups, implying that the system doesn't reward IQ, alone (may also reward something else that immigrants may have/do more of, say, hard work...) - but then they blow that one out of the water with "but most of them were students"... sigh.

◦ **Re:Too simple (Score: 1) by shrewdsheep on Thursday June 14, @09:02AM**

by [shrewdsheep \(5215\)](#) on Thursday June 14, @09:02AM ([#692775](#))

You can't being to make sense of complicated phenomenon...

if your IQ has already dropped for so long.

• **ought to be expected (Score: 1, Interesting) by Anonymous Coward on Thursday June 14, @08:51AM (6 children)**

by [Anonymous Coward](#) on Thursday June 14, @08:51AM ([#692772](#))

Humans evolve. Evolution does not stop for humans. It is going extra fast because we have changed our environment. The biggest change is birth control, which evolution will defeat.

Evolution makes bears behave differently from sheep. Clearly, it affects the mind. People get strange ideas that this doesn't apply to humans, or at least doesn't apply to humans today, or maybe that it couldn't possibly apply to humans living in different environments around the world. Sorry, but evolution affects human brains today.

Evolution does not value "advanced" life forms. Being intelligent only counts if it causes more descendants in the Nth generation. (that is, not merely having kids but having kids who themselves successfully reproduce)

If intelligence doesn't help reproduction, then random drift will slowly destroy it. If intelligence impedes reproduction, as it does in most countries, then evolution will actively select against intelligence.

◦ **Re:ought to be expected (Score: 0) by Anonymous Coward on Thursday June 14, @09:27AM (2 children)**

by [Anonymous Coward](#) on Thursday June 14, @09:27AM ([#692785](#))

your statement is ridiculous.

evolution is the process by which, over generations, traits that help survival are selected for.

this study is a comparison of two subsequent generations. men today compared with their fathers.

your statement is that out of the fathers, only the idiots had kids, therefore the kids are idiots, and this statement is provably false -- the percentage of men who do not have children has not changed (although it is true that the age of fatherhood may have changed, and it may affect offspring intelligence).

I find it much more likely that something in the education system/"nurture" element changed, rather than something in the genetic makeup of the population.

and, just to explain the word "ridiculous": by your argument, there isn't a problem, since the process can easily be reversed for the next generation, so humanity is ok.

▪ **Re:ought to be expected (Score: 0) by Anonymous Coward on Thursday June 14, @10:05AM**

by [Anonymous Coward](#) on Thursday June 14, @10:05AM ([#692800](#))

I find it much more likely that something in the education system/"nurture" element changed, rather than something in the genetic makeup of the population.

Feminism. Schools have changed from establishments of learning to childcare, where young minds go to learn not to ever make anyone feel uncomfortable.

▪ **Re:ought to be expected (Score: 2) by FatPhil on Thursday June 14, @11:02AM**

by [FatPhil \(863\)](#) <[pc-soylentNO@SPAMasdf.fi](#)> on Thursday June 14, @11:02AM ([#692811](#)) [Homepage](#)

Reversion to the mean will disguise the evolution that is indeed taking place in one generation.

You're falling for the son-of-a-monkey fallacy. Of course monkeys became men, even if no man was the son of a monkey. And evolution can be damn fast if the selective pressure is high and the opportunities for variation are also high, the slow and steady view of evolution was debunked decades ago. Google "punctuated equilibria".

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The "free" in #freearistarchus is the "free" in "free jazz"

◦ **Re:ought to be expected (Score: 2) by maxwell demon on Thursday June 14, @09:33AM (2 children)**

by [maxwell demon \(1608\)](#) ★ on Thursday June 14, @09:33AM ([#692787](#)) [Journal](#)

Humans evolve. Evolution does not stop for humans.

But evolution works on time scales much larger than the time since IQ tests were invented.

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The Tao of math: The numbers you can count are not the real numbers.

▪ **Re:ought to be expected (Score: 1, Insightful) by Anonymous Coward on Thursday June 14, @10:00AM**

by [Anonymous Coward](#) on Thursday June 14, @10:00AM ([#692797](#))

go research epigenetics

▪ **Re:ought to be expected (Score: 1, Insightful) by Anonymous Coward on Thursday June 14, @10:25AM**

by [Anonymous Coward](#) on Thursday June 14, @10:25AM ([#692806](#))

Not really. If dumb people have three kids on average, and smart people one, IQ will shrink if it's heritable, and it will only take one generation to happen.

• **fundamental contradiction (Score: 0) by Anonymous Coward on Thursday June 14, @09:04AM**

by [Anonymous Coward](#) on Thursday June 14, @09:04AM ([#692776](#))

IQ rises when during a course of your psychological maturation you believe in contraction of knowledge - i.e. that there is one true answer for each question. Highly intelligent are highly focused on problem solving, believing there is one optimal solution.

New favorite (rewarded) paradigm is "creativity" and "lateral thinking" and that is contradictory to focusing and dismissing unnecessary information. New human is intellectual gatherer and hoarder, staggering under the weight of everyday trivia.

Also, many common daily brain exercises, even in intellectual professions, has been "helped" away by informatics, automation, organization, and instant solutions, allowing broader participation, but also taking away brainpower, not unlike what industrialization and mechanization of physical work did to muscle power and body fitness. Perhaps you should reserve some time for mental gym too?

So, this shouldn't be a surprise, really. When God wants to punish someone (especially the lazy, so it seems) he makes their wishes come true.

• **A Coincidence? (Score: 1, Funny) by Anonymous Coward on Thursday June 14, @09:05AM**

by [Anonymous Coward](#) on Thursday June 14, @09:05AM ([#692777](#))

The last time I took an IQ test was in the 70's, and the numbers have been dropping ever since. Hmm ... a coincidence? I think not!

• **They changed the sampling process. (Score: 5, Touché) by Bill Evans on Thursday June 14, @09:09AM**

by [Bill Evans \(1094\)](#) on Thursday June 14, @09:09AM ([#692778](#)) [Homepage](#)

The pair analysed the scores from a standard IQ test of over 730,000 men – who reported for national service between 1970 and 2009.

So, the smarter guys are learning to avoid national service.

• **who reported for national service between 1970... (Score: 4, Interesting) by Anonymous Coward on Thursday June 14, @09:13AM**

by [Anonymous Coward](#) on Thursday June 14, @09:13AM ([#692780](#))

The Norwegian mandatory military service been exempted since the 70s for people attending university.

• **Working as a teacher (Score: 2, Interesting) by engblom on Thursday June 14, @09:44AM**

by [engblom \(556\)](#) on Thursday June 14, @09:44AM ([#692790](#))

Working as a teacher I am not surprised at all. Pupils are so busy with their mobiles that they skip all mind developing activities. They do not even develop proper social skills, as they hardly talk to each other anymore. I have seen an enormous drop in grades the latest few years.

Of course this has been going on for longer time. It begun with TV. It is easy to get addicted to entertainment. In the beginning, there was not enough channels with interesting program to capture all spare time. Slowly with cable TV and more channels, this became a reality. Still, you had no TV with you to school and work, so it was not an all around the clock entertainment. Also, unless people are watching earlier recorded programs, people might have had some TV-free spare time between the programs. Then came internet addiction (videos, online gaming etc), and suddenly one could easily occupy all the spare time at home easily.

Mobile phones are just the latest development, as now one is able to take the entertainment anywhere. Entertainment is used instead of doing some critical reasoning with the brain, learning social skills, reading educating books, following lectures etc. Entertainment does not give multifaceted stimuli to the brain, as real life do.

The more easy people get entertainment, the less interested they are in learning things.

• **for those still smart enough (Score: 0) by Anonymous Coward on Thursday June 14, @10:01AM**

by Anonymous Coward on Thursday June 14, @10:01AM (#692799)

and willing to confront the wishy-washy 'all is well' signals ..
here are first level searches into things some of us have studied and found to be significant in relation to this.
there's more to show about what you could call a war on us, but try to get some grounding here:

<https://www.startpage.com/do/search?q=cell-phone+radiation+intelligence+brain+function+> [startpage.com]
<https://www.startpage.com/do/search?q=digital+television+brain+function+> [startpage.com]

(1)

"But I don't like Spam!!!"