23andMe's Study Draws Links between Covid-19 and Our Genetics

Last spring as Covid-19 began making its way through the population 23andMe began a study to answer the question "who's likely to get sick, or to get very sick?"

A common problem with studies like this is finding enough participants, with enough diversity for the results to be accurate. The study collected data from more than a million participants, with three percent of participants identifying as black, and 11% of participants identifying as Latino. These numbers are still lower than the diversity represented in the U.S but are higher than the diversity in most studies of this type.

People were asked about their age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and specific questions about Covid-19, such as were they diagnosed with Covid-19, were they hospitalized, and how they assessed their breathing. Of the 1.05 million respondents, 15,000 reported being diagnosed with Covid, with 1,1000 hospitalized.

The study found a strong connection between blood type and rather or not someone would test positive for Covid-19. People with the O blood type were less likely to test positive for the virus.

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> *One especially strong link popped out: the gene that determines a person's blood type. The analysis showed that the ABO gene strongly linked to the possibility that someone would test negative for Covid-19. A person's blood type is*

determined by variations in a single gene. The team found that the O blood type was less likely to test positive for the infection than expected—suggesting, though not necessarily proving, that the blood type could be more protective against the disease.

23andMe's Huge Covid-19 Study Draws Links Between the Virus and Our Genetics