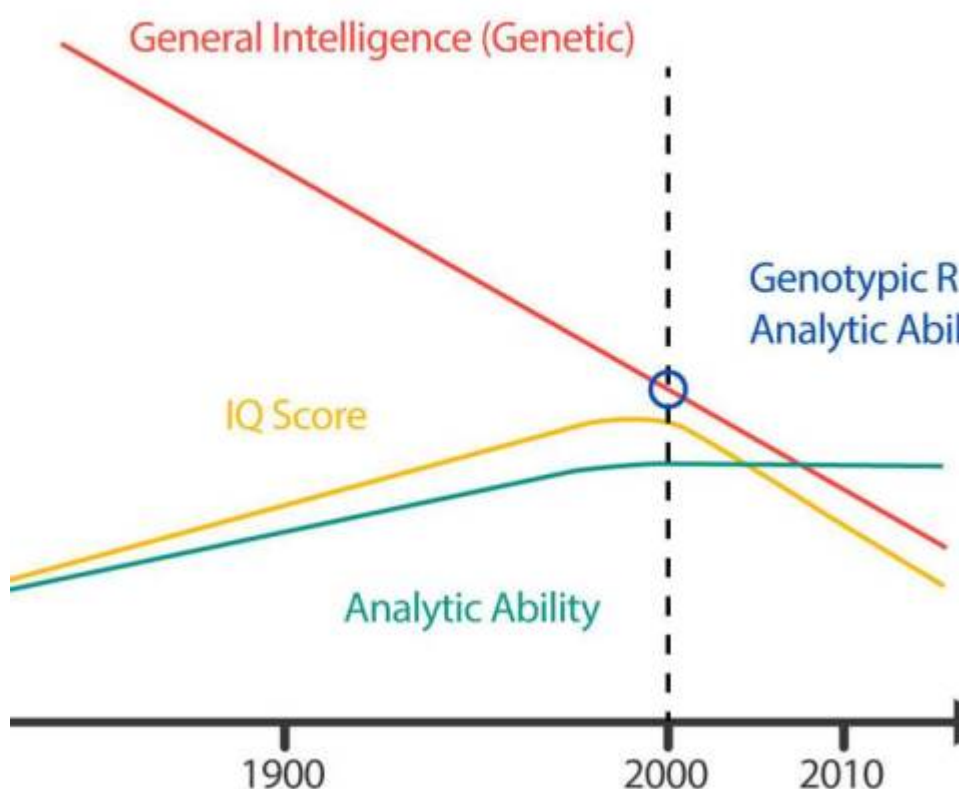


Are People Becoming Dumber? Reasons Behind Low Human IQ

Description

OPINION



A new documentary broadcast by Arte TV Channel has revealed that the average human IQ is gradually decreasing. The authors explain this trend by the hazardous impact of the chemicals in our environment. Anthropologist Edward Dutton, however, is confident that the negative trend has been triggered by much more unwelcome factors.

The phenomenon of a lowering [human IQ](#) can be explained by genetic factors, rather than environmental ones, Edward Dutton said in an interview with [Sputnik Germany](#).

"80% of our intellect is inherited," the analyst said, adding that such human abilities as the speed of reaction, inventiveness, the ability to distinguish colors and remember the rows of numbers have deteriorated over time. "These changes have been observed for over hundreds of years. So we definitely have become less intellectually developed — because of genetics," Dutton said.

According to the analyst, in the Middle Ages, there used to be strong natural selection in favor of intelligent people: those who had better [intellectual](#) abilities became more prosperous within a society, and therefore more successful, the analyst argued.

"Ahead of the industrial revolution, 50 percent of the population in every generation, namely its wealthier part, had by 40 percent more surviving children than the other 50 percent of poorer people. This means that the level of IQ increased in every generation. This was common for the period from the Middle Ages until about 1800. By 1800, the human IQ was so high that there was this massive breakthrough with many new inventions and the industrial revolution," Dutton said.

With the start of the industrial revolution, people's way of life and the selection process have changed.

The expert noted that the average human IQ has been dropping since that time, as families with a higher level of intelligence started to use contraceptives and control birth rates.

"People who are smarter tend to use more contraceptives because they think more about their future, act less impulsively and tend to a more thorough planning," Dutton said.

Moreover, things like vaccinations started to emerge and lowered the infant mortality rate, thus affecting the process of natural selection, Dutton explained.

This has led to a situation where more and more children survived in poorer families.

In Dutton's opinion, the trend has further intensified with the development of feminism when women started spending more time on education and gave birth to fewer children.

Brains in Danger?

The documentary broadcast by Arte was supposed to contain a genetic explanation of this phenomenon along with the environment-related one. But in the end this aspect was not covered at all.

Commenting on possible reasons behind this, Dutton said: "I don't know, maybe they were just afraid to present my explanation to the public," Dutton said.

Researchers interviewed by the authors of the documentary said that the main explanation behind the lowering IQ levels are chemical substances that are present in the mother's womb and affect the development of the brain of an unborn child.

The anthropologist argued that the reason why the documentary did not present his point of view was possibly the fact that "there is nothing that we could change in this area."

Positive changes are possible when one talks about environment, but any adjustments in the field of genetics are viewed by people as "monstrous and scary."

The only way to stop the trend is to prevent people with a lower level of IQ from reproducing. But this is a move that no one, of course, would ever dare to make, the researcher concluded.