Twin Study Shows Anorexia Has a Genetic Component

BY KATE JOHNSON
Montreal Bureau

Anorexia nervosa is a heritable psychiatric disorder with warning signs that can be identified decades before the onset of the illness, the largest twin study on the disorder shows.

“Genes play a substantial role in the development of this illness; there is a clear biological component,” said lead author Cynthia M. Bulik, Ph.D., in a teleconference about the new research (Arch. Gen. Psychiatry 2006;63:305-12).

The findings are good news for patients and their families, said Dr. Bulik, the William R. and Jeanne H. Jordan Distinguis-...