

## 12 Turkish Siblings Who Can Only Move On All Fours Are A Mystery To Scientists

The vast majority of people stand up straight and walk on two legs. Every now and then, for fun, some people might walk on all fours. But one family in Turkey doesn't walk around on all fours for fun. For reasons scientists don't fully understand, this family has to walk on all fours.

Five siblings of the 19-member Ulas family in Turkey, suffer from a rare disability. They lack balance and stability, so they can't stand up straight. If they want to move around, they have to move around on all fours.



The family was discovered in 2005. 14 members of the Ulas family appear to be completely normal, but five of them have to use a quadrupedal gait. Scientists are baffled by their condition.

The Ulas family was featured in a BBC documentary called "The Family That Walks On All Fours" in 2006. According to the film, out of the five quadrupedal family members, two sisters and a brother have walked exclusively on all fours since birth. Another brother and sister are sometimes able to walk upright.

"It's amazing as an example of a strange irregularity of human development," said Professor Nicholas Humphrey, who visited the family twice during the documentary. "But our interest is how they can live in the modern world."

For people who have to walk on all fours, living in the modern world is no easy task. The family does its best to protect them, but the quadrupedal members of their family often get ridiculed.

Most of the time, the sisters stay indoors crocheting. But one of the brothers is more adventurous. He goes out to the local village and interacts with people.

The documentary offers a popular explanation for their strange way of walking. Some scientists have noted that the way they walk is similar to how primates - such as gorillas - walk. These scientists say their walk is evidence of "reverse evolution."

However, recent studies have disproved this theory. American scientists have now concluded that the walk is an adaptation to a rare disorder, and not a result of "reverse evolution."

Scientists now believe that the gait could be a byproduct of a hereditary condition called Uner Tan syndrome. This syndrome causes cerebellar hypoplasia, which disturbs the sense of balance. The siblings may have started walking on all fours in order to adapt to the rare syndrome, which is named after the Turkish evolutionary biologist who first studied them.

"I was determined to set the record straight, because these incorrect claims about the nature and cause of quadrupedalism have been published over and over again, without any actual analysis of the biomechanics of their gait, and by researchers who are not experts in primate locomotion," said lead researcher Liza Shapiro, from the University of Texas.

No matter the cause of their rare condition, there is not a cure for it in sight. The Ulas siblings will probably have to walk on all fours for the rest of their lives.