Hip dysplasia is one of those conditions that all dog breeders are very well aware of and have been making considerable efforts to eliminate. Almost every breed’s parent club recommends screening breeding stock for hip dysplasia. HD is the reason why Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA) was founded.

However, with all the effort that went into monitoring the inheritance of the disease, with incredible accumulation of data spanning over 50 years, the consensus is now emerging that the causes of hip dysplasia are only about **20% genetic and 80% environmental**.

 You can mate two parents with excellent hips and get dysplastic offspring, or mate two dysplastic parents and get pups with normal hips. Some scientists go as far as to say that hip dysplasia is predominantly a bio-mechanical process, with genes playing a very limited part.

Theories that describe HD as mostly a bio-mechanical condition point to the fact that HD affects breeds with higher **ratio of weight to height**, and secondly that research has shown overweight individuals within the same breed to be **twice as likely** to develop the condition.

OFA data lists Bulldog and Pug as the two most affected breeds and Italian Greyhound and Whippet as least affected. Talk about compact weight juxtaposed to light, lean body!

In a study that compared Lab puppies on restricted diet to those on control diet, the results were striking (Vanden Berg-Foels et al 2006).

 **By the age of 6 years puppies fed a restricted diet had 48% less evidence of HD than the controls, with heaviest dogs affected the most.**

