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**Sinopsis**

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Given a prime  $p$ , a group is called residually  $p$  if the intersection of its  $p$ -power index normal subgroups is trivial. A group is called virtually residually  $p$  if it has a finite index subgroup which is residually  $p$ . It is well-known that finitely generated linear groups over fields of characteristic zero are virtually residually  $p$  for all but finitely many  $p$ . In particular, fundamental groups of hyperbolic 3-manifolds are virtually residually  $p$ . It is also well-known that fundamental groups of 3-manifolds are residually finite. In this paper the authors prove a common generalization of these results: every 3-manifold group is virtually residually  $p$  for all but finitely many  $p$ . This gives evidence for the conjecture (Thurston) that fundamental groups of 3-manifolds are linear groups.

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