

Search for Parkinson's genes turns to online social networking

There's a growing interest in what our genes say about our health. And in recent years, quite a few companies have sprung up to help us listen with the help of personalized DNA tests. For a few hundred dollars and a vial of spit, these companies will search your DNA for sequences that predict your physical traits, your response to certain drugs and your risk for any number of diseases.

Most customers likely wanted to find out more about their personal genetic risks not to contribute to medical science. But in 2009, the company decided to do genetic research, and it invited anyone diagnosed with Parkinson's disease to donate their DNA sample. 23andMe recruited people online using social media, and at Parkinson's research conferences. In exchange for participating, they're offered the company's personalized genetics services free. Participants provided a DNA sample and answered questions about their diagnosis, symptoms and lifestyle habits in online surveys.

"They may in theory be able to involve 10,000 people with Parkinson's disease, and do it cheaply and easily," explains [Hank Greely](#), a Stanford Law School professor who follows genetics companies. "Now that's something that academic researchers would love to be able to do."

View the original article here: [Search For Parkinson's Genes Turns To Online Social Networking](#)