

Canada: In search of genomic incentives

In a renewed quest for medical breakthroughs, the Canadian government recently committed \$67.5-million for research into “personalized medicine.” This bold initiative promises faster, smarter and cheaper drug development by uncovering new targets, identifying patients likely to benefit from experimental therapies, and using molecular markers of disease to predict drug response.

Yet, personalized medicine follows on decades of efforts at plying molecular genetics toward drug development. To be sure, these approaches have borne fruit. But the process of developing cures remains painfully slow, error prone and costly. Despite steady increases in industry and public investment in research, the number of new drugs approved each year continues to decline.

Personalized medicine may very well fix a science that seems to be failing drug development. But perhaps we should be asking how drug development is failing science.

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