Is genetic screening for all a new eugenics?

In recent weeks, there's been talk of three types of genetic testing transitioning from targeted populations to the general public: carrier screens for recessive diseases, tests for *BRCA* mutations, and non-invasive prenatal testing (NIPT) to spot extra chromosomes in fetuses from DNA in the maternal bloodstream.

Are these efforts the leading edge of a new eugenics movement? It might appear that way, but I think not.

When I began providing genetic counseling 30 years ago at CareNet, a large ob/gyn practice in Schenectady, NY, few patients were candidates for testing: pregnant women of "advanced maternal age" (35+), someone with a family history of a single-gene disorder or whose ethnic background was associated with higher prevalence of a specific inherited disease. Their risks justified the cost and potential dangers of the tests.

Now the picture is rapidly changing as plummeting DNA sequencing costs and improved technologies are removing economics from the equation. It's becoming feasible to test anyone for anything – a move towards "pan-ethnic" genetic screening that counters the "*sickle-cell-is-for-blacks and cystic-fibrosis-is-for-whites*" mindset.

So here's a look at three very different types of genetic tests that are poised to make the leap to the general population. And despite new targets revealed with annotation of human genomes, some of the detection technologies themselves are decades old.

Read the full, original story: Genetic testing for all: Is it eugenics?