

What will advances in genetics during 2014 mean for future of medicine?

No question that 2014 has been a year to celebrate for the field of genetics. Stem cell therapy, gene therapy, next-generation sequencing as a reliable clinical tool: we may not be there yet, but surely we are close. We have reached the suburbs of the Promised Land. Technical milestones have been met, technical challenges surmounted – palpably, we stand on the cusp of a new era, where we will have means to treat the untreatable and cure the incurable.

The many success stories of 2014 bring along with them reminders of an important corollary: that the cost of what we are capable of doing already exceeds our collective ability to pay. The idea that personalized medicine will pay for itself is a joke, and every \$300,000 a year drug we produce is the punchline. As we recognize the many amazing ways in which genetics is poised to change medicine, there are other questions that must be raised, about who will benefit and who will be left behind.

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