

## Mandatory pre-marital genetic testing prevents disease, and marriages in Saudi Arabia

In the past year, about 165,000 couples have decided not to get married after receiving test results showing “genetic incompatibilities”, [the Saudi Gazette website reports](#). The tests are mandatory for couples who are planning to tie the knot, and [screen for a number of diseases](#), including sickle-cell anaemia and HIV. Dr. Mohammad al-Saidi, from the health ministry, says the aim is to reduce the risk of parents passing on illnesses or genetic disorders to their children.

According to Dr Saidi, 60% of couples end their engagements after receiving their results, which he says is a sign of success. “The high percentage of failed engagements due to medical risks shows that the society has become more educated and aware of the importance of physical health,” he says. “This will also save money for the family and the country.” In January, a Riyadh-based genetic researcher said Saudi Arabia [has one of the highest rates](#) of genetic diseases in the world. Pre-marital health tests aim to prevent marriages between close relatives – a longstanding practice in Saudi Arabia – which can lead to serious medical problems in offspring.

**Read full, original article:** [Saudi Arabia: Genetic tests lead to 165,000 break-ups](#)