Gene tests for psychiatric drugs benefit industry, but do they help patients?

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis.

Genetic tests to identify the most effective psychiatry drugs are the hot new technology in the race to create personalized treatments based on people's DNA. More than 600,000 of these tests likely have been administered in the last three years, based on company websites and research data, to better treat conditions ranging from depression to attention deficit disorder to anxiety. In a nod to the tests' growing acceptance, the federal Medicare program agreed last year for the first time to pay for the GeneSight test for some depressed patients.

But a review by the New England Center for Investigative Reporting has found that virtually all the evidence that these psychiatric tests work is based on limited studies funded by the companies themselves or researchers they fund, including all five studies used to promote GeneSight on the company's website.

The federal government doesn't require companies to prove thousands of tests are accurate before marketing and selling them. Unlike drugs, the Food and Drug Administration does not regulate them, although the agency has announced plans to.

Patients also cannot find out for themselves if their doctor stands to gain financially by recommending a personalized medicine test. A public federal database created in 2014 to disclose financial relationships between the healthcare industry and physicians excludes most genetic tests.

Read full, original post: More harm than good?