Personalized medicine can perfect blood typing with DNA

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Now that everyone who wants to sound sophisticated about health care is talking about "personalized medicine"—even the president!—the open question is, what part of medicine is going to get personalized first? Which is to say, what can the intricacies of people's genomes say about the best way to treat what ails them? The answers may well be in blood.

Blood, you see, doesn't just come in types A, B, AB, and O. The "positive" or "negative?" Nope. In fact, let's get all the way into the weeds: Scientists have since discovered over 300 proteins that contribute to blood type. The AB+ on your blood donor card? Yeah, that's a massive oversimplification. And while that massive oversimplification works pretty well for the majority of blood transfusions, people who have rare blood types need more precise blood typing.

The most precise blood typing you can get is with DNA. Blood genomics has come up in Europe, and this year in the US saw the creation of a new National Center for Blood Group Genomics. "It's one of the first areas where you can really implement personalized medicine." says Connie Westhoff, Director of Immunohematology, Genomics, and Rare Blood for New York Blood Center, one of the groups behind the national center.

Read full, original post: Beyond blood type: genomics can show what you're really made of