

## Racial biodiversity: Indigenous people offer opportunity to understand how genetic mutations evolve

*[Editor's note: Keolu Fox is a biomedical researcher studying indigenous people.]*

Ninety-five percent of all drugs [are tested] only on people of European descent. [But] what if we looked closely at people with very distinct genomes to learn more about why drugs and diseases work differently in them? As an Indigenous scientist, I believe that paying attention to racial and ethnic diversity in biomedical research is not just a matter of social justice, it can also be a golden opportunity to understand more about disease.

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There are some major challenges to studying Indigenous genomes...[M]any Indigenous groups do not want their origin stories challenged, so even though the scientific questions asked may be legitimate, researchers need to respect these wishes...[S]ome Indigenous people are less interested in participating in research because they have more basic concerns [like clean water].

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[D]iverse genes can help us understand the complicated way in which diseases work...By being able to separate the genetic contribution to diseases, we could start to tease out the non-heritable causes and figure out ways to counteract or minimize them.

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We must step away from the idea that European genes are the standard model. In doing so, we may see that the wonderful diversity of humanity...could potentially hold the key to the next medical breakthrough to benefit all of us.

**The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [The treasure trove of unique genomes hiding in plain sight](#)**