For precision medicine to work, physicians must incorporate holistic health factors, like belief

[Editor's note: Dr. Sharon Bergquist is a clinician in the division of general medicine and geriatrics at Emory University. She also teaches as an assistant professor on the faculty of Emory's School of Medicine.]

Personalized medicine, which involves tailoring health care to each person's unique genetic makeup, has the potential to transform how we diagnose, prevent and treat disease. After all, no two people are alike. Mapping a person's unique susceptibility to disease and targeting the right treatment has deservedly been welcomed as a new power to heal.

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New technologies are allowing us to probe DNA, RNA, proteins and gut bacteria in a way that will change our understanding of health and disease. Our hope is to discover novel biological markers that can be used to diagnose and treat common chronic conditions, including Alzheimer's disease, heart disease, diabetes and cancer.

But when it comes to preventing the leading causes of death which include chronic diseases, genomics and precision medicine may not do as much as we hope.

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Despite the inherent limitations to the ability of genomic medicine to transform health care, medicine in the future should unquestionably aspire to be "personal." Genomics and molecular biosciences will need to be used holistically – in the context of a person's health, beliefs and attitudes – to fulfill their power to greatly enhance medicine.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: Soon, Medication Will be Custom Tailored to Your Specific Genetics