

## Precision medicine could revolutionize healthcare in Africa, but obstacles abound

Although scientists worldwide have been pushing for ways to improve health care by tailoring diagnostics and treatment to the environment, lifestyle and genes of individual patients, few researchers have taken this precision-medicine approach in Africa.

That may be changing. In the past five years, international research-funding organizations have invested more than US\$100 million in projects to boost genetic research on people in Africa.

There's a big problem, however. Precision medicine is expensive. For a continent that, for the most part, struggles to provide even basic health care, tailor-made treatments for individual patients may seem like an unaffordable luxury.

But to fulfil this vision, a lot of research needs to be done on African genomes. Most genomic studies so far have focused on white people of European descent. A meta-analysis published in *Nature* last year<sup>2</sup> revealed that only 3% of global genome-wide association studies — which link genetic traits to patterns in health, disease or drug tolerance — had been performed on Africans, compared with 81% on people of European ancestry.

An added challenge is that Africans are the most genetically varied people on Earth. Africa is where humanity originated and where humans have lived the longest

Africa map or type unknown

**The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post:** [How the genomics revolution could finally help Africa](#)

**For more background on the Genetic Literacy Project, read** [GLP on Wikipedia](#)