

Viewpoint: ‘Race’ may be a social construct, but denying ancestral-based group genetic differences is ‘indefensible’

With the help of [advances in DNA sequencing], we are learning that while race may be a social construct, differences in genetic ancestry that happen to correlate to many of today’s racial constructs are real.

...

I am worried that well-meaning people who deny the possibility of substantial biological differences among human populations are digging themselves into an indefensible position, one that will not survive the onslaught of science. I am also worried that whatever discoveries are made — and we truly have no idea yet what they will be — will be cited as “scientific proof” that racist prejudices and agendas have been correct all along, and that those well-meaning people will not understand the science well enough to push back against these claims.

...

So how should we prepare for the likelihood that in the coming years, genetic studies will show that many traits are influenced by genetic variations, and that these traits will differ on average across human populations? It will be impossible — indeed, anti-scientific, foolish and absurd — to deny those differences.

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It is important to face whatever science will reveal without prejudging the outcome and with the confidence that we can be mature enough to handle any findings. Arguing that no substantial differences among human populations are possible will only invite the racist misuse of genetics that we wish to avoid.

Editor’s note: David Reich is a professor of genetics at Harvard

Read full, original post: [How Genetics Is Changing Our Understanding of ‘Race’](#)