'Crystal ball' for disease? Genetic tests could predict risk of Alzheimer's, heart disease, cancer

If a crystal ball could reveal your personal risk for developing heart disease or breast cancer or Alzheimer's disease, would you pay to take a look?

…

Today, thanks to the mapping of the human genome subsequent efforts to make sense of the resulting blueprint of As and Ts, Gs and Cs, we are close to being able to predict your future health from your DNA. Using advanced computer models, scientists are adding together the influence of the hundreds, even thousands, of DNA variants associated with a given disease into what is called a "polygenic score."

…

Polygenic scores may also influence disease-screening strategies. Recently, it was shown that a polygenic score can predict risk for aggressive prostate cancer, suggesting that it could identify men who would benefit most from PSA screening. Finally, knowledge of polygenic risk can be useful in planning for the future. For example, although we don't yet have effective treatment for dementia, knowing that you are at high risk for Alzheimer's disease can help you make informed decisions about changing your behavior—keeping heart and brain healthy through diet and exercise, and, of course, paying more attention to your future finances and plans for long-term care.

Read full, original post: [How Well Can a Genetic Test Predict Your Future Health?](#)