

If a gene test could reveal a high risk of dying, would you want to know?

If a fortune teller had “read” my future two years ago, I would have learned that I was at high risk of dying. Soon. A year ago I was diagnosed with the disease that killed baseball legend Lou Gehrig. It’s called amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or ALS, and mine is moving swiftly. I’d have wanted to know what was headed my way.

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We are at the point where such “fortunes” can be told. I’m not talking about the kinds of genetic analyses done by 23andMe or Ancestry.com. I’m talking about something called [polygenic analysis](#). This cocktail of genetics, high-end statistics, and advanced computer models, with a twist of epidemiology, measures the effects of myriad genes for a particular disease and distills them into the risk of that disease. All it takes is the DNA extracted from a sample of saliva.

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I ran a polygenic analysis on my own DNA and learned that I carry several common ALS genes that also involve the immune system.

This information gives me something to do about my condition: try immune therapies that just might slow the progression of my disease.

Read full, original post: [I have ALS. I wish a polygenic analysis had told me it was coming](#)