

How widespread genetic testing could change the way we live, treat disease

More than half of Icelanders have now had their precise genetic make-up sequenced and analysed.

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The aim of such projects is not only to learn more about disease in the general population, but also to create personalised medicine based on individuals' particular genetic quirks.

Some people, for example, metabolise medicines more quickly than others, with implications for treatment regimes. Others may have lifestyles that increase their chances of developing a condition from which they are particularly at risk.

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[A] similar project is underway in Estonia, where citizens are being invited to volunteer their DNA.

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The data is being analysed for 700,000 gene mutations linked to medical conditions. And the results are now being made available to participants for the first time.

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Whether people are at higher or lower risk of developing cardiovascular disease or type-2 diabetes, for example, can depend on a combination of their genetic predisposition and their lifestyle – diet, exercise and so on, explains [Prof Lili Milani, deputy director of the Institute of Genomics, University of Tartu.]

So sharing this kind of data with participants requires care. News of a predisposition to a serious illness would be extremely distressing to hear.

Read full, original post: [Genetic testing: What secrets could it reveal about you?](#)