

## Beware claims by consumer DNA testing companies: They can't predict how long you'll live

"Upload DNA data and know more about yourself," promises [Genomelink](#), anywhere from fitness-related attributes, such as longevity, pulmonary function, and job-related exhaustion, to intelligence-associated characteristics.

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There are two key issues when it comes to predicting traits with DNA data, according to [Daniel Benjamin](#), a behavioral economist at the University of Southern California. One is that there is very little scientific evidence to support predictions for certain phenotypes, including many associated with fitness or parenting behaviors. On the other hand, even for traits that scientists have carefully examined in large GWASs, such as educational attainment, polygenic scores are typically only useful for predicting differences between groups. "That's what makes them useful in research," Benjamin explains. "But for the purpose of predicting what any particular individual's phenotype is going to be, the predictive power is very low."

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Given these shortcomings, why provide such tests at all? "At this point, we are purely focusing on the user having a positive, fun experience—we are not asking users to take any action," says Genomelink's [Tomohiro] Takano. "My philosophy is that, the information is already available, so rather than hiding that, we want to try to educate people so that they can understand the limitation of the science."

**Read full, original post:** [What Your DNA Can't Tell You](#)