

Hospital study accused of stealing data

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Children's Hospital of Philadelphia has been accused by Icelandic company deCODE genetics of basing a major project on stolen information.

The company has accused the project director at the hospital and three other scientists, all of whom are former deCODE employees, of conspiring to steal the company's scientific assets, the Philadelphia Inquirer reported Monday.

The suit claims that the project leader, Hakon Hakonarson, copied hundreds of gigabits of information from deCODE's computers without the permission of the company before he left the company in May.

The information related to a deCODE study of genetic data from 100,000 Icelanders aimed at identifying genetic causes of illnesses including diabetes and heart disease. Hakonarson and the three other scientists were involved in a similar study of 100,000 children at the Philadelphia hospital's new genomics center, the newspaper reported.

Members of the scientific community have said they hope the suit does not delay the hospital's study.

"I think it would be a disappointment if it were held up," University of Iowa pediatrician Jeff Murray told the Inquirer. "Scientists and doctors are well motivated to take care of kids, but there are sometimes personal issues that get in the way."

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