

Public health in the genomic era: A global issue

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The major challenge for public health in the era of genomics is to generate the base of evidence necessary to demonstrate when use of genomic information in public health can improve health outcomes in a safe, effective and cost-effective manner, participants at an international meeting have concluded.

In their report, "Public health in an era of genomic and personalized medicine," experts in medicine, law, bioethics, public health, and genetics have identified key issues for the future of global public health in light of rapid developments in genomic medicine and associated technologies.

"This report reflects some very innovative thinking about the way genomics will inform and influence public health research and practice, so we're hoping that the public health community will implement our recommendations," said Eric M. Meslin, Ph.D., director of the Indiana University Center for Bioethics and a member of the steering committee for the international meeting, held in May 2010 at Ickworth House in Suffolk, England.

The experts concluded that genomic medicine was very much an international issue, recommending that appropriate genetic [health services](#) and research should be fostered in low and middle-income countries. They also called for increased global collaboration and ongoing efforts to integrate genomics into public health research and practice, including creation of a research infrastructure for generating an

evidence base for genomic medicine.

"Genomics is relevant and important to all countries and populations," said Tikki Pang, Ph.D., director of research policy & cooperation for the World Health Organization. "This report will help clinicians, [public health](#) practitioners and relevant decision-makers frame and focus their strategies and approaches."

The group included representation from many countries including Argentina, Australia, Canada, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Nigeria, the United Kingdom and the US, and was co-organized by four partners: the PHG Foundation, Cambridge, UK; the IU Center for Bioethics through a grant from the Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation; the McGill University Centre of Genomics and Policy in Montreal, Canada, and the University of Western Australia Telethon Institute for Child Health Research.

More information: The full report, "Public health in an era of genomic and personalized medicine," including recommendations, is available from the [PHG Foundation website](#).

Provided by Indiana University School of Medicine

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