

# New app measures the risk of chronic diseases

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Globally, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and cancer are responsible for thousands of deaths a year in economically active population. Such problems led to a Mexican scientific team to develop a virtual platform that soon, will let people know the risk they have to present these diseases, and provide recommendations to modify their habits and reduce the possibility of suffering them.

To reach this goal, the group in charge of Lourdes Barrera Ramirez, researcher at the National Institute of Respiratory Diseases (INER) in Mexico City, works in a [citizen science project](#) called "My Health History", which is part of the bigger project "Science that Breathes" ([www.cienciaqueserespira.org](http://www.cienciaqueserespira.org)), which makes available to the [population](#) an informative and direct participation platform on different health issues.

"The project 'My health history' will make available to the population a tool that will lead them to answer a questionnaire about their family history and their own health and lifestyle. Once the person sends their answers, the system will tell them if their risk for each of the above conditions is low, medium or high, and a series of recommendations to reduce the possibility of illness," says Barrera Ramirez.

She adds that it is very important to calculate the risk of developing chronic diseases early in life, especially in children, youngsters and adults who haven't shown symptoms yet. "Although we cannot change our genetic structure, knowing our family [health history](#) can help reduce the risk of developing any of these conditions."

The researcher highlights that it is possible to reduce the possibility of disease by eating a healthy diet, getting enough exercise and not smoking. "However, we can take better preventive measures if we know how big is the risk we have to develop the [disease](#)."

In addition, says Barrera Ramirez, this year the research team hopes to have a mobile application of the project. "With this app we aim to have communication with the user via messages, which are sent directly to the application, on advice to change their habits in both physical activity and nutrition."

This project also intends to make a map of health in Mexico for major

chronic diseases that plague the country and using tools of complex systems analysis, coupled with the study of the new relationship between genetic risk and style life of the population this will be possible to achieve.

This work is particularly important when you consider that cardiovascular diseases are listed as one of the leading causes of death in Mexico, second only to traffic accidents. As for diabetes, is a disorder associated with many other conditions and according to the latest National Health and Nutrition Survey 2012, 6.4 million people report having been diagnosed with the condition.

"Regarding cancer, we know that some types are in first place in mortality, with the highest incidence of breast, prostate and colon cancer. Although the most important problem is lung cancer, being the second leading cause of cancer death in men and third in women in Mexico," says the researcher.

Provided by Investigación y Desarrollo

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