Most human genes have been featured in research about cancer

October 28 2021

Credit: PDPics/Pixabay CC0 Public Domain

An analysis of PubMed papers has found that 87.7% of all human genes appear in at least one paper that also mentions cancer. In the analysis, appearing in a commentary publishing October 27th in the journal

Trends in Genetics, author João Pedro de Magalhães of the University of Liverpool calls attention to how a bias toward cancer may impact which genes are studied and which studies are funded.

While a mention of cancer does not necessarily imply that the gene has a meaningful link to the disease, researchers do use keyword searches in large-scale surveys of publication data to uncover connections between genes and to decide which genes to study. "The study of nearly any human gene can be justified based on existing literature by its potential relevance to cancer. Understanding the reasons for biases in large-scale analyses and correcting for them is of growing importance to increase the value of insights and predictions," writes de Magalhães in the commentary.

"If a gene has not been associated with cancer yet, it probably means it has not been studied enough and will most likely be associated with cancer in the future," he writes. "In a scientific world where everything can be associated with cancer, the challenge is determining which are the key drivers of cancer."

More information: João Pedro de Magalhães, Every gene can (and possibly will) be associated with cancer, *Trends in Genetics* (2021). DOI: 10.1016/j.tig.2021.09.005

Provided by Cell Press

Citation: Most human genes have been featured in research about cancer (2021, October 28) retrieved 26 April 2024 from https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-10-human-genes-featured-cancer.html

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private

study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.