

News release

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Global public health practice in the era of genomics and personalised medicine

An international expert summit was held at Ickworth House, Suffolk UK, in the second week of May. It aimed to set out the future direction and challenges for public health in an era of genome-based and personalised medicine, with a particular focus on global health.

The meeting was co-organised by four partners: the PHG Foundation (Cambridge, UK), the Centre for Bioethics (Indiana University, USA), the Centre of Genomics and Policy (McGill University, Canada) and the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research (University of Western Australia). It included experts from a range of disciplines from Argentina, Australia, Canada, Nigeria, the Netherlands, France, Italy, the USA and the UK. The meeting also involved a wider event, held on 12th May at Queen's College, Cambridge and sponsored by the Centre for Science and Policy (CSaP) at the University of Cambridge, at which the guest speaker Sir Mark Walport (Director of the Wellcome Trust) spoke about the prospects for a '\$100 genome'.

The meeting sought to consider how developments in genomic science and technology could improve population health. The ultimate purpose of the meeting was to develop practical recommendations to direct policy development and research priorities over the next decade. Discussions ranged from a review of the current science and socio-political context, to the delivery of health services and translation of from research into clinical practice. There was vigorous debate around the role of key stakeholders such as policy-makers and commercial organisations, the implications of direct-to-consumer genetic testing services, and the importance of genomics for developing countries and indigenous populations.

Several key topics and tensions emerged during the meeting that will be identified, elaborated and addressed in future publications. These included: unrealistic expectations surrounding the use of genomics for prediction of complex diseases; a lack of evidence of clinical effectiveness upon which to make decisions regarding implementation; the mounting tension between individual choice and societal responsibility; ethical issues surrounding the use of data; and the respective roles of public and private institutions.

A detailed Report will be developed and published later this year.

- Ends -

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Notes to Editors

- The PHG Foundation is a genetics policy think-tank and health service development NGO based in Cambridge, UK.
- Our mission is *making science work for health* - identifying the best opportunities for 21st century genomic and biomedical science to improve global health, and to promote the effective and equitable translation of scientific innovation into medical and public health policy and practice.
- We provide knowledge, evidence and ideas to inform and educate, and to stimulate and direct well-informed debate.
- We also provide expert research, analysis, health services planning and consultancy services for governments, health systems, and other non-profit organisations.

The PHG Foundation is the working name of the Foundation for Genomics and Population Health, a charitable company registered in England and Wales, charity no. 1118664 / company no. 5823194.

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