

UAE heading towards genome era - Pure Health to create a regional reference laboratory and a genome testing facility.

Genomes - an organism's complete set of DNA, including all of its genes. Reference laboratory to be created by Pure Health.

DUBAI, DXB, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, September 6, 2019 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The UAE is always at the forefront of providing best to its citizens and this is true for the generations to come. The current indication of setting up state-of-the art genome center proves that the leadership of the country firmly believes in creating a healthy society for its citizens.

As early as 1963, the World Health Organization (WHO) observed that genetic considerations can add a new dimension to public health work - a concern not only for the health and wellbeing of persons now living, but also for generations yet to come.

Genes are stretches of DNA - the chemical substance that makes up genetic material - that serve as a sort of tutoring manual telling our body how to make the proteins and perform the other tasks that your body needs.

Genomics - an interdisciplinary field of science focusing on the structure, function, evolution, mapping, and editing of genomes - holds answers to 7,000 rare genetic diseases. There are more than 350 million people living with such rare diseases worldwide, more than cancer and Aids patients combined.

The UAE government has launched an initiative to set up state of the art Genome Centre to utilize the benefits of genetic science and to implement modern and innovative techniques, which includes DNA sequencing, profiling and micro-array. This initiative will not only help in controlling the spread of non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and cancer but will also provide a platform to create personalized medicine program for individual patient.

The Ministry of Health and Prevention (MOHAP) in collaboration with Pure Health Laboratory Network, is planning to launch the first phase of genome center soon. The partners are eyeing on a nationwide program in a bid to create genome database for all genetic diseases in the UAE. The method will enable the healthcare service providers to explore the field of pharmacogenomics and determining the likely response of an individual to therapeutic drugs.

The genetic information is becoming an essential tool in healthcare and comprehensive genomic data that will be obtained through population studies will help to develop the knowledge base. The population health profiles will be effective for the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of major diseases, hence reducing the spread of diseases. The utility of genetic information lies in the fact that it not only helps in the diagnosis of the disease and risk assessment but also plays a vital role in disease management and progression. In the UAE, approximately 4,500 new cases of cancer are reported in a year. As for diabetes there were over one million cases of diabetes in UAE in 2017, that is an approximate average of eight per cent of the population.

The joint initiative of Pure Health and MOHAP will help create personal care programs tailored to the individual situation.

Dr Shakoor Malik, Chief Scientific Officer at Pure Health, said: "Pharmacogenomics is the relationship between a patient's inherited genetic makeup and their response to pharmaceutical drugs. The study of this individual gene makeup will lead to personalized medicine program. Targeted sequencing for a specific disease as well as whole genome sequencing will be performed with the help of state-of-the-art technologies. The data will be analyzed with the help of genomics data bases as well as expression signatures. This data will reflect the distinct situation of each patient and will lead to personal care program. This approach will help in the selection of responsive patients for a particular drug and hence avoiding the adverse drug reactions and maximizing the drug efficacy."

Pure Health will create a regional reference laboratory and a genome testing facility that caters to the entire country. "The project is estimated at a budget of Dh200 million and the first phase will be launched within six months. The short-term plan is the launch of the regional reference laboratory, which will include the genetic laboratory setup." said Dr Malik.

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