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The role of genomics in gene therapy and diagnostic testing and related intellectual property issues

Gene therapy has consistently failed to achieve its therapeutic potential. However, genomics is now making it increasingly possible to manipulate real-world DNA leading to the treatment of hereditary and acquired genetic disease. This is the beginning of a new era of genetic manipulation which will have clinically beneficial applications. However, intellectual property issues continue to plague the definition of gene and gene therapy. Critics have pointed out that gene patents fail to meet the criteria of intellectual property. Genes are naturally occurring and while much intellectual effort may have gone into discovering them within the DNA sequence, discovery is not the same as invention. The location of a gene never met the criterion for being non-obvious. DNA patenting has proven to be a very active area; however, at least a fifth of the human genome is subject to patent claims.

Biography

Krishna Dronamraju is the Founder of The Foundation for Genetic Research in Houston which was founded in 1992, who is the President and Director of the Foundation. Previous Advisors to the Foundation include Sir Arthur C Clarke, well known Author of many books in science and science fiction; Dr Victor McKusick, MD, Chairman of the Department of Medicine, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. Current Advisors include Professor M S Swaminathan, Advisor to the Prime Minister, and Chairman of the M S Swaminathan Research Foundation in Chennai, India; and Professor N A Mitchison, at the University of London, UK. He has been nominated for the Nobel Prize. He was a Member of the US Presidential Delegation led by President Bill Clinton to India in 2000. He received his PhD in Genetics for research under the direction of the famous scientist J B S Haldane, who is well known as a polymath, a Founder of population genetics, and as a prolific Author of numerous popular scientific essays.

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