**Editorial**
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# Editorial Note on Genetic Screening

**Wang W***

*Research Institute in Healthcare Sciences, University of Wolverhampton, UK*

## Editorial

Genetic screening is a type of public health program which is systematically offered to a specified population of asymptomatic individuals with the aim of providing those identified as high risk with prevention and early treatment. Genetic screening is an important vehicle for translating genetic and genomic advances into population health gains. This has contributed to increasing pressures from various sources to introduce or expand population-based genetic screening programs.

Genetic screening refers to screening for genetic diseases. Depending on how genetic screening programs are organized, the recruitment strategies used, the timing of screening, the predictive value of the screening tests, and the interventions available for those with positive results, there can be very different activities involved with a range of implications.

Genetic screening is broadly defined as a systematic program offered to a specified population of asymptomatic individuals. A variety of test methods which can be used to make a risk estimate regarding an inherited predisposition to disease, to make a risk estimate regarding the possibility of transmitting a disease to offspring, to detect an inherited disease at an early stage, for the purpose of disease prevention, early treatment. Genetic screening programs are a type of public health program which are systematically offered to most or all members of a specified population with the aim of delivering a net benefit to the population.

Genetic screening involves tests which encompass a complex and systematic program of services offered to a defined population who are informed of the potential risks and benefits through extensive education and counselling. Genetic screening programs thus require coordination among the testing, the clinical services, and the program management levels to enable the overall objectives of the program to be achieved and to ensure accountability.

Genetic screening tests can involve biochemical, molecular and other types of analyses or even the use of family history questionnaires to predict which individuals are at risk of developing or transmitting a genetic condition. Some tests are strong predictors of disease occurrence but many have a high degree of uncertainty. The advantages of genetic screening programs are providing high-risk individuals with prevention, early treatment, or reproductive options. It is important to consider the added value of genetic screening by addressing the social, behavioural, and environmental determinants of health.

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***Address for Correspondence:** Dr. Weiguang Wang, Research Institute in Healthcare Sciences, University of Wolverhampton, UK, E-mail: w.wang2@wlv.ac.uk*



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