

UK announces genomic collaboration with Thailand to unite against health threats

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New partnership will explore mutual priorities for improving patient outcomes

UK patients will benefit from a new partnership with Thailand to share expertise of genome sequencing, collaborate in research, education and training opportunities, knowledge exchange and genomics data handling.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed by UK Health Minister Nick Markham and Thailand's Minister for Public Health and Deputy Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul. Both countries have committed to working together on genomics and understanding rare and undiagnosed diseases and cancer, as well as building stronger academic and institutional links through working groups that could start as early as February 2023.

The collaboration will allow the 2 countries to better share information on genomics, the study of people's DNA, including Genomics Thailand's 50,000 Genome Initiative and the UK's pioneering 100,000 Genomes Project led by Genomics England.

Thailand's Minister for Public Health and Deputy Prime Minister, Anutin Charnvirakul, said, "This is the first partnership between Thailand's Ministry of Public Health and the UK's Department of Health and Social Care. It marks an important step for genomics collaboration between the 2 countries. With mutual interest, Thailand and the UK will come together to share knowledge and best practices in genomics medicine, including data handling, ultimately to help treat and protect the people from diseases that we may have never been able to do so before."

Building on the success of the ground-breaking 100,000 Genomes Project - which has already helped diagnose rare disease in hundreds of children - the government recently allocated new funding to genomics to ensure a better quality of life for UK patients. In December 2022, £175 million was awarded in new genomics funding to ensure a better quality of life for our patients, putting the NHS on the front foot and affirming our position as a life sciences superpower.

This funding will build on the world-leading work of the NHS Genomic Medicine Service, harnessing innovation to drive improvements across the health system.