

Aus: Dont embrace DNA tests and genetic mapping

18 July 2013 | News | By BioSpectrum Bureau



Singapore: The Royal College of Pathologists has warned Australians to be cautious about embracing DNA tests and genetic mapping too quickly.

At the health informatics conference being held in Adelaide, discussions about genome mapping advances are being discussed, with focus on how technology can improve healthcare.

Ms Katerina Andronis of the Health Informatics Society of Australia said efficiencies were possible. "We need to use technology to enable the more efficient way of managing our patients," she explained.

Professor William Dalton of M2Gen said people's DNA profiles should be held in a national database in conjunction with facts about their medical history and lifestyle.

"It is not about just knowing the genome, it is putting it in the context of the system. We can predict how a patient may develop a disease or respond to therapy," he added.

Professor Graeme Suthers from the Royal College of Pathologists agreed that a DNA test might soon hold the key to revolutionising patient care.

"The ability to sequence the entire human genome, an individual's entire genetic code, is now literally within our grasp," he said.

But he urged Australians not to rush in to DNA profiling without a national framework being established, saying important issues needed to be sorted out.

"We need to ensure that the databases that we use are accredited at an international level so when you get a test result from this fantastic mode of testing you can absolute assurance that it is right," he said.

Professor Suthers said laboratories and staff doing the testing needed to be adequately qualified so the health of patients was not put at risk.