Public Lecture: Personalised Medicine

The Future of Modern Health Care. "Personalised Medicine": Better, Cheaper, more Personal?

Public Lecture
Tue 03/03/2015
Goethe-Institut Sydney
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Free admission
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"Personalised medicine" currently gains considerable attention and evokes a multitude of hopes in modern medicine. The identification of genetic markers enables more precise diagnoses, targeted therapy and more specific statements about the personal prognosis. Often used as synonym for future medicine, "personalised medicine" promises to be more personal, better and cheaper than current medicine.

(1) However, big achievements in basic genetic research do not mean necessarily better personal treatment for the majority of patients in clinical medicine. It is more likely that future clinical success in targeted therapies will be limited to subgroups of patients. In contrast, a considerable part of patients will have no personal benefit at all.

(2) "Personalised medicine" is genetic biomarker based targeted diagnostic and therapy. It does not focus on a more personal patient-doctor relationship, like patient-centred or person-centred medical care provides.

(3) In fact so called "personalised medicine" is a research and economy driven adventure governed by global stake holder, e.g. pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies. Since economically independent and publically funded research is missing widely, these private interest groups are setting the research agenda following their commercial interests. In this context and with the record of current cost development of new cancer drugs in targeted therapies the promise of cost saving and of cheaper health care lacks any evidence.

(4) Furthermore "personalised medicine" is associated with ethical problems like priority setting and opportunity costs in solidarity based public health care systems. "Personalised medicine" provides modern, highly specific and expensive diagnostics and treatments, which will serve subgroups of patients only. At the same time research in other fields of clinical medicine, which could serve more than some subgroups of patients, remain underfunded. A public debate on priority setting in medical research and treatment and about how societies and public health systems can influence the development of the research agenda regarding the priorities for...
Development of the research agenda regarding the promise of future health care is needed.

Genetic biomarker based "personalised medicine" does not contribute to a more personal treatment of single patients, like in patient- or person-centred medical care provide. Subgroups of patients, e. g. in oncology, have medical advantages from the present progress in "personalised medicine", but not the overall majority of patients. Any empirical evidence is lacking for the promise of a cheaper health care through "personalised medicine." However, due to past experiences an increase of costs is more likely.

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**Date:** Tue, 03 March 2015  
**Time:** 6pm doors, 6.30pm start  
**Venue:** Goethe-Institut, 90 Ocean Street, Woollahra NSW 2025  
**Language:** English  
**Entry:** Free with Registration  
**Registration:** [arts1@sydney.goethe.org](mailto:arts1@sydney.goethe.org)

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