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The future of returning genetic test results for psychiatric conditions

Morgan Driver
Virginia Commonwealth University

Sally Kuo

Danielle Dick

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The public wants to receive genetic information for psychiatric conditions, but we don’t know how it will impact them.

Results
• Many people are interested in receiving their genetic feedback for psychiatric conditions.
• Family and personal history, predictive ability of the genetic test, and effective treatment for the condition increase interest in genetic testing.
• In hypothetical scenarios, the return of genotypic information indicating increased risk for a psychiatric condition lowers an individual’s confidence to control behavior, reduces self-agency, and negatively impacts affect.
• Individuals may believe that a change in behavior is important, but there is little evidence that genetic feedback indicating increased risk for a psychiatric condition is associated with behavior change.

Conclusions
• The negative impact of genotypic results indicating an increased risk may stem from common misconceptions of complex disorders.
• Regardless of one’s genetic knowledge, a majority of people are interested in receiving genetic feedback for psychiatric conditions, highlighting a need for effective communication of genotypic information.

Gaps in our knowledge
• How will receiving true complex genotypic information for psychiatric conditions impact a person’s behavior and psychological state over an extended period of time?
• How can we provide complex genetic feedback in a way that is understandable to the individual, and that does not create a deterministic mindset?
• How will individuals be educated about genetics in general and in the context of their personal genotypic information?

Any questions? Please contact Morgan Driver at driverm@vcu.edu.