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Whole Genome Sequencing of Newborn Should Be Resisted

A report says the legal and ethical issues of whole-genome sequencing should be debated before adopting it in government newborn screening programs. But already the federal government has given $25 million to develop a sequencing program to detail every baby’s DNA. But sequencing could elicit paternity surprises, reproductive risks or adult onset conditions.

One idea is to sequence every baby but withhold the results from parents, discussing only newborn risks. When the child is “mature,” the government could reveal the rest. I disagree. The government should sequence no one. And parents should refuse as well. Sequencing is a decision adults should make only for themselves.

“Call for clearer directions on use of whole genome sequencing for newborn screening.”
MTB Europe, April 9, 2014.