

1 lakh Asians to be genetically screened for clinical diseases

OUR BUREAU

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Bengaluru-based Medgenome Labs Pvt Ltd, a genomics-based research and diagnostics firm, will undertake diagnostics of clinical diseases of close to one lakh South and South-east Asians in association with South Korean biotech firm MacroGen Inc and Singapore-based Nanyang Technological University.

The company has already sequenced the genomes of 2,500 people from India, Singapore, South Korea, Indonesia, Vietnam and Laos.

Focus on specifics

Speaking to *BusinessLine* at the launch of the second phase of the research project on cardiovascular diseases in partnership with Madras Medical Mission hospital here, VL Ramprasad, Chief Operating Officer, Medgenome, said the process is on to narrow down the area of focus to select medical conditions such as diabetes, cancer, select cardiovascular diseases and rare genetic diseases.

The objective of the project is to build a database that could be accessed by academics, hospitals, pharmaceuticals and government agencies. Ramprasad said the database will help spread awareness about genetic conditions, give insights and aid doctors to design precise course of treatment and intervene early as the data collected will be diverse. It will also aid in policy-making, he added.

Investment

Each of the three partners has invested \$10 million for the project that will take another 4-5 years to complete.

Talking about the project with MMM, Ramprasad said the company will be the technological partner for the project on cardiac diseases such as myocardial infarction, hypertension and sudden cardiac deaths, in collaboration with Glasgow University.

The project will have 600 patients and MedGenome is spending close to \$300 per patient.