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Gene Box looks at nutrigenomics revolutinizing wellness industry

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By **Manbeena Chawla** | September 26, 2019



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Nutrigenomics Can Propel Wellness to a Trillion-dollar Industry by Personalising Services

Nutrigenomics, the science of understanding the relation of food and nutrition with genetic constitution, is poised to play a pivotal role in nutritional services to promote a healthy balance of the mind and body resulting in overall well-being. Nutrigenomics is the science that studies the interaction between food and genetics which has paved the way for meaningful personalization and faster adoption of nutrition services and can propel the Indian wellness segment to a trillion-dollar industry, Pranav Anam, Founder, The Gene Box, says.

Nutrigenomics is a deep science that can help guide a health and wellness consultant to decide regulation of eating, a person's taste perception, macronutrient response and micronutrient requirements to manage food intolerance and sensitivities as well as weight as well as help identify the person's risk of developing common chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes, obesity, heart disease, etc.

"Many a time we see that a diet plan that works well for someone does not work at all for someone else. This is because our genes can respond to nutrients in a way that is different from other people. The food we eat impacts our nutritional requirements, metabolism and the ability to maintain optimum weight and the varied responses are governed by our genetics. Approaches based on nutrigenomics are being applied globally to assess the risk of developing metabolic syndrome based on genetics and the person's diet or lifestyle. It also explores the links between gut microbiota, obesity and mental health as well as correlation between a specific nutrient intake and disease, such as coffee and cardiac irregularities. Nutrigenomics can offer a substantial scientific base to the health and wellness industry and make its suggestions more scientific, credible and hence, assertive, something that can expand its acceptance and give the necessary thrust to the industry to reach the trillion-dollar mark" says Pranav Anam, Founder, The Gene Box.

The launch of the Human Genome Project in the 1990s and subsequently, mapping of human DNA ushered in the 'era of big science' and jump started the field of nutrigenomics that

explains the relationship between nutrients, diet, and genetics. Many deem it to be the ‘next big thing’ to fight lifestyle-linked diseases. In view of the increasing burden of nutrition-related non-communicable diseases in India, Mr. Anam feels nutrigenomics may play an important role to develop more sustainable approaches that encourage dietary change in Indians.

“Nutrigenomics is a whole system approach – it examines the relationship between what we eat and our risk and response to disease and the molecular mediators. Nutrigenomics uses scientific tools to identify disease risk and progression, and can be used to offer personalised interventions such as identifying and providing supplements to poor folate metabolisers in pregnancy, or recommending a low-fat diet versus low carbohydrate diet as the best way to lose excess weight.Knowing how the genetic constitution can impact well-being can have a profound effect – armed with this information, an individual can make appropriate choices regarding his/her health and save the routine of trial and error,” adds Mr Anam.

A recent, multi-centre trial in the European Union showed that developing algorithms that integrated information on diet, genotype (the set of genes in its DNA responsible for a particular trait), and phenotype (the set of characteristics resulting from the interaction of its genotype with the environment) can offer larger health gains for personalised nutrition approaches than adhering to standard dietary guidelines. In a country like India where population is dense and disease burden is high, a nutrigenomic approach can be a gamechanger, especially in dealing with lifestyle diseases that constitute the lion’s share of the non-communicable diseases in the country. Globally, nutrigenomics market was valued at USD 287 million in 2018. It may grow at a CAGR of 16 per between 2019 and 2025 and reach nearly USD 845 Million by 2025, as sectors such as food and beverages (F&B) rapidly adopt nutrigenomics to offer customised menu to the patrons.

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