



Toward Precision Medicine: Building a Knowledge Network for Biomedical Research and a New Taxonomy of Disease

National Research Council, Division on Earth and Life Studies, Board on Life Sciences, Committee on A Framework for Developing a New Taxonomy of Disease

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Motivated by the explosion of molecular data on humans-particularly data associated with individual patients-and the sense that there are large, as-yet-untapped opportunities to use this data to improve health outcomes, *Toward Precision Medicine* explores the feasibility and need for "a new taxonomy of human disease based on molecular biology" and develops a potential framework for creating one.

The book says that a new data network that integrates emerging research on the molecular makeup of diseases with clinical data on individual patients could drive the development of a more accurate classification of diseases and ultimately enhance diagnosis and treatment. The "new taxonomy" that emerges would define diseases by their underlying molecular causes and other factors in addition to their traditional physical signs and symptoms. The book adds that the new data network could also improve biomedical research by enabling scientists to access patients' information during treatment while still protecting their rights. This would allow the marriage of molecular research and clinical data at the point of care, as opposed to research information continuing to reside primarily in academia.

Toward Precision Medicine notes that moving toward individualized medicine requires that researchers and health care providers have access to very large sets of health- and disease-related data linked to individual patients. These data are also critical for developing the information commons, the knowledge network of disease, and ultimately the new taxonomy.

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