Genetics and Life Insurance
A View Into the Microscope of Regulation

Genetic testing is becoming increasingly available at ever lower prices. What could this mean for individuals and life insurers?

There are many social, ethical and regulatory considerations in genetic testing. Whilst this hardly comes as a surprise, only recently has the topic started to attract the attention of regulators, policymakers and the general public.

1. An insured may want to know more about their GENETIC PROFILE – whether or not they are predisposed to a specific disease or medical condition.

2. The insured may GO TO A DOCTOR for a genetic test, or purchase a “DIRECT-TO-CONSUMER” TEST online.

3. Although there are concerns about the predictive power of “direct-to-consumer” tests, the market is set to grow.

4. The INSURED MAY NOW HAVE MORE INFORMATION about their risk of certain conditions than a life insurer would.

5. REGULATION COULD BALANCE THIS ASYMMETRY by ensuring both parties have the same information.

However, insureds fear being denied insurance, and insurers fear anti-selection may jeopardise their ability to cover claims.

REGULATION OF GENETIC INFORMATION DIFFERS WIDELY.

It varies from no regulation at all, to a complete prohibition on the use of genetic data.

Further resources:
- Genetics and Life Insurance: A View into the Microscope of Regulation
- Interview with Ronald Klein, Director of the Global Ageing Research Programme, The Geneva Association