

PRECISION MEDICINE

Text books describe the disease in general and usually mention the treatment of the disease, without taking into account the individual variations of patients suffering from the disease, Physicians and surgeons have been managing their patients with specific diseases individually, taking care of their personal requirements. This used to be called personalized or individualized approach where the treatment was tailored to individual needs of the patients.

The advances in field of genetics have given an opportunity to doctors to treat and manage their patients individually by determining the genetic source of the ailment. A nucleic acid testing machine is available for the diagnosis of tuberculosis which analyses the specimen concerned and determines the presence of resistance to drugs. So a patient with resistance will be treated differently than the one without resistance.

The same can be extended to different malignancies. Same histological type of tumor can have different genetic map which determines the nature of aggression and response to chemotherapy, so different patients with same histologic type of tumor

may be treated differently due to genetic differences with appropriate drugs. A global atlas of genetic mapping of tumors has been developed and is in use.

As mentioned earlier for tuberculosis, the same principle can be applied for acute infections. The sample can be put in the machine in a pattern of tuberculosis nucleic acid testing, giving the exact organism and its susceptibility, and each patient will be treated accordingly saving time, reducing discomfort and cost. The rapid development of gene detecting machines, the genetic diagnosis of cause and determination of appropriate treatment will provide us an opportunity to treat every patient differently while apparently having same pathology.

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