

Big Pharma Bought Access to Your DNA from Genealogy Company and What They're Using It for Should Concern Everyone

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Have you paid for an ancestry report? Perhaps someone gave it to you as a gift. Either way, pharmaceutical giant GlaxoSmithKline now owns your genetic fingerprint.

In a paradigm shift that is making some people uneasy, human DNA has been dubbed a commodity. The company [23andMe](#) boasts the world's largest database of genetic code. This extensive library of DNA has been acquired by offering the public a genealogy report in exchange for a fee.

Many people excitedly paid to hand over their DNA to the company not realizing it would become the "new frontier" for pioneering drugmakers. Pharmaceutical companies now stand to profit greatly from the DNA people paid to send in.

GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) [purchased](#) a \$300 million share in the genology company 23 and me, which provides ancestry reports to those who submit their DNA. GSK's CEO [stated](#) that this "merger" will accelerate the development of "novel treatments and cures."

Now that GSK has access to customers' genetic blueprints, the company says it can use this DNA in studies in order to fast track new drugs for approval, according to the [press release](#).

[Reports](#) indicate that 80% of 23andMe customers opt-in to share their genetic fingerprint along with information about their health and lifestyle through a survey. This survey is simply framed to be for research purposes.

More than [5 million](#) people have willingly submitted their DNA to 23andMe in exchange for a chance to access details about their ancestry.

Privacy Concerns

"If people are concerned about their social security numbers being stolen, they should be concerned about their genetic information being misused," [says Peter Pitts](#), president of the Center for Medicine in the Public Interest.

"This information is never 100% safe. The risk is magnified when one organization shares it with a second organization. When information moves from one place to another, there's always a chance for it to be intercepted by unintended third parties."

What is Pitts talking about when he says third parties? Health insurance companies is a big one. Here's an alarming quote straight from the 23andMe [website](#):

"Your genetic data, survey responses, and/or personally identifying information may be stolen in the event of a security breach. In the event of such a breach, if your data are associated with your identity, they may be made public or released to insurance companies, which could have a negative effect on your ability to obtain insurance coverage." [emphasis mine]

Big pharma is laughing all the way to the bank seeing as how pharmaceutical companies can now use this DNA data to create experimental drugs. These experimental drugs can then be marketed to consumers based merely on their genetic profiles which may or may not be very accurate in the first place.

Even the FDA has pointed out that false positives or false negatives for certain genetic traits do occur. Of course this won't stop them from approving fast-tracked experimental drugs based on genetic data.

If you want to close your account at 23andMe you can access that [here](#), however, the company outright states,

"Any research involving your data that has already been performed or published prior to our receipt of your request will not be reversed, undone, or withdrawn."

Tough luck for those who have willingly paid to hand over their DNA.

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