



QATAR GENOME PROGRAMME SURVEYS FIND PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR INITIATIVE

QF Member Aims to Create Healthier Population

Doha, Qatar, October 10, 2017: Two surveys on Qatar Genome Programme (QGP) have found widespread willingness among the local population to participate in the initiative, which seeks to map the Qatari genome. The results of the surveys were announced yesterday at the Ministry of Public Health.

The two surveys were conducted by the Social and Economic Survey Research Institute at Qatar University, the first was directed to the general public, and the second to healthcare professionals.

A survey of 837 adult Qatari nationals found that an overwhelming majority would be willing to participate in the QGP, where, in order to participate, individuals contribute biological samples and their medical history to Qatar Biobank.

Dr. Asmaa Al Thani, Chairperson of Qatar Genome Programme Committee and Board Vice Chairperson of Qatar Biobank, said: “We are very pleased to see the positive response to the Qatar Genome Programme among the local population. The mission of both Qatar Genome Programme and Qatar Biobank is to create a healthier population for generations to come, and this can only be done with the support and participation of the Qatari people. We are now more confident than ever that we are on the right track for a healthier future.”

When respondents were asked about their reasons for wanting to participate, the three most popular responses were: to know more about their health, to prevent future health conditions, and to contribute to science.

A second survey, targeting healthcare providers, who will be responsible for incorporating genomics into their patients’ treatments, showed that the vast majority of respondents were willing to use genomics to treat and diagnose. It also showed a great need for genetic counselors, and the need to expand education in genomic medicine in order integrate it into the clinical setting.

So far, Qatar Biobank has collected samples from more than 7,000 volunteers, and QGP has sequenced more than 6,000 genomes.

In March 2017, QGP, a member of the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development, launched a research consortium of more than 80 genomic researchers representing several institutions in Qatar, including QGP, Qatar Biobank, Sidra Medical and Research Center, Hamad Medical Corporation, Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar, Qatar Biomedical Research Institute, Qatar Computing Research Institute, and Qatar University.

The investigators are working on exploring the huge genotypic and phenotypic data sets produced by Qatar Biobank and QGP in an effort to identify key features of the Qatari genome. This knowledge will



contribute to the development of individualized disease treatment and prevention methods, which in turn will lead to more efficient and effective outcomes.

For more information, please visit: www.qatargenome.org.qa

Image Captions:

Image 1: Participants at an event, organized at the Ministry of Public Health, received snapshots of Qatar Genome Programme's (QGP) surveys results aimed at studying people's perception on genomics research in Qatar.

Image 2: Dr. Said Ismail, Qatar Genome Programme (QGP) Manager, welcoming participants to the event organized to announce results of QGP's surveys.

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About Qatar Genome Programme:

The Qatar Genome Programme (QGP) is a national initiative aiming to map the genome of the local population. Managed by the Qatar Genome Committee, and incubated by Qatar Biobank, QGP uses a collection of samples and data from Qatar Biobank participants to identify genotype-phenotype associations relevant to the Qatari population.

From its early conception, QGP was built based on a national strategy that would lay the strong foundations required to build a unique model that would position Qatar as a leading nation in the implementation of precision medicine.

The QGP envisages its role as a national platform at which all local stakeholders can meet and contribute to the program in a way that would make maximum use of resource and prevent duplication of efforts.

Qatar Foundation – Unlocking Human Potential

Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF) is a non-profit organization that supports Qatar on its journey to becoming a diversified and sustainable economy. QF strives to serve the people of Qatar and beyond by providing specialized programs across its innovation-focused ecosystem of education, research and development, and community development.

QF was founded in 1995 by His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Father Emir, and Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, who shared the vision to provide Qatar with quality education. Today, QF's world-class education system offers lifelong learning opportunities to community members as young as six months through to doctoral level, enabling graduates to thrive in a global environment and contribute to the nation's development.



QF is also creating a multidisciplinary innovation hub in Qatar, where homegrown researchers are working to address local and global research and development challenges. By promoting a culture of lifelong learning and fostering social engagement through programs that embody Qatari culture, QF is committed to empowering the local community and contributing to a better world for all.

For a complete list of QF's initiatives and projects, visit <http://www.qf.org.qa>