



DNA 'app' for smartphones developed

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PARIS, Feb. 25 (UPI) --

PARIS, Feb. 25 (UPI) -- French researchers say they have developed new software that will allow people to view their complete genetic code on their smart phones.

The software, developed by four scientists from Bordeaux in southwest France, is currently under development in the United States since genetic sequencing is strictly limited under French ethics laws, Radio France Internationale reported Thursday.

The DNA app translates the data obtained from DNA testing into three gigabytes of readily accessible information that can highlight potential health risks, such as a genetic predisposition to breast cancer, with a red warning symbol, its developers said.

The application is designed as a means of "prevention and vigilance," said project founder Patrick Merel, who with colleagues has founded a company, Portable Genomics, in California.

In France, genetic sequencing can only be carried out by doctors and only for medical purposes.

By suggesting genetic predispositions to illnesses, the new application risks alarming people unnecessarily, said Patrick Gaudray, a member of France's National Ethics Council and research director at the French National Centre for Scientific Research.

Data obtained in DNA screening is not always reliable and has limited medical applications, he said.

Merel said he disagrees.

"Our genes are our own," he said. "Why shouldn't we have access to them?"

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