

Health Highlights: July 2, 2014

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Here are some of the latest health and medical news developments, compiled by the editors of HealthDay:

Rare Diseases Targeted in New Research Program

A network of research centers is being established to learn more about rare diseases that individually may affect only a handful of people worldwide, the U.S. National Institutes of Health announced Tuesday.

Doctors at the centers will examine and conduct genetic tests on patients, and share their findings with other experts. By collecting and analyzing this data, it's hoped that doctors will be able to solve these medical mysteries, *NBC News* reported.

Learning more about these rare diseases -- many of which are caused by genetic mutations -- may also provide new insight into more common diseases.

"The Undiagnosed Diseases Network that we are announcing today will focus on the rarest of disorders - often those that affect fewer than 50 people in the entire world," said Dr. Eric Green, director of the National Human Genome Research Institute, one of the NIH institutes, *NBC News* reported.

"They are so rare that they may never have been discovered or doctors may never have encountered them," he added.

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