

Using zebrafish genes to diagnose rare diseases in the Middle East

Hi XXX,

As part of their focus on advancing precision medicine in the Middle East, researchers from Sidra Medicine and Qatar Precision Health Institute (QPHI), members of Qatar Foundation, have embarked on a **pioneering precision medicine program that uses zebrafish** to identify rare diseases and uncover potential treatment solutions.

There are **2.8 million people living with rare diseases in the Middle East**, a significant public health burden. And while scientists have traditionally used rodents to understand the biology behind a particular condition, zebrafish – a minnow species commonly found in the waters of southeast Asia – appeal to geneticists because they **share 70% of genes with humans**. Further, their remarkably fast biological development allows doctors the ability to give answers to patients within a week, as compared to 21 days for rats and mice.

If you're interested in learning more, I'd be happy to connect you with **Dr. Sahar Da'as**, Head of Sidra Medicine's Zebrafish Facility, or **Dr. Said Ismail**, Acting Director of QPHI. They can speak to current research and example patient cases, as well as the impact of this initiative in treating patients of Arab descent, who continue to be greatly underrepresented in biobank databases worldwide.

Look forward to hearing from you.

Best,
XXX

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