

PETER DONNELLY - "UNDERSTANDING COMMON DISEASE"



I think it's a really exciting time. At the moment there are a lot of studies which have been looking to understand the genetics behind common diseases in humans and for ten or fifteen years we'd been making progress but in a fairly limited way. In the last few months it's been possible to do and report on a whole new type of study. That's meant that we're suddenly learning huge amounts about genetic variations - what it is, genetically, that makes one person more likely to get diabetes and another person more likely to get heart disease. Over the next few years, hopefully, we'll see the fruits of that; we'll learn not just what variants are associated with the diseases, but we'll be able to use that genetic information to understand the biology - to find out what's going on inside people's bodies that triggers diabetes or that causes heart attacks and so on.