



## 「찾아가는 희귀질환 진단지원 사업」 성과와 기대

이예은<sup>1</sup> , 김지영<sup>2</sup> , 최준길<sup>2</sup> , 김영배<sup>2</sup> , 전종근<sup>3\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>부산대학교 의학연구원, <sup>2</sup>질병관리청 만성질환관리국 희귀질환관리과, <sup>3</sup>부산대학교 의과대학 소아청소년과 희귀질환센터 의학유전학클리닉

### 초 록

**목적:** 「찾아가는 희귀질환 진단지원 사업」은 거주지 중심 전장유전체염기서열분석(whole genome sequencing, WGS) 지원을 통해 기존 진단법의 한계로 인해 진단이 어려운 희귀질환자, 특히 비수도권 지역 환자들의 희귀질환 조기 진단지원 및 진단을 제고를 목적으로 한다. 본 보고에서는 해당 사업의 성과를 중심으로, 조기 진단 및 치료 연계 등 임상적 유용성과 환자 수혜 현황 등 정책적 효과를 종합적으로 분석하고자 하였다.

**방법:** 2024년 8월부터 전국 23개 비수도권 희귀질환 전문기관 및 상급종합병원에서 진료를 받은 희귀질환 의심 환자 410명을 대상으로 WGS를 실시하였다. 환자의 거주지 중심 의료기관에서 검체 채취, 검사 의뢰, 진단보고서 제공, 유전상담까지의 전 과정을 단일 진료 흐름 내에서 수행하는 원스톱 진단체계를 운영하였으며, 외부검사기관에서 WGS검사를 시행하였다.

**결과:** WGS를 시행 받은 총 410명의 희귀질환 의심환자 중 129명(31.5%)에서 유전자의 병인성 변이가 확인되었으며, 검사 평균 소요기간은 약 28일이었다. 양성판정을 받은 환자들의 78.2%에서는 산정특례 및 의료비 지원 등 국가 정책과 연계된 실질적 치료 혜택을 받을 수 있었다. 진단환자의 약 30%는 치료약물 또는 식이요법 등 치료 연계가 가능한 희귀질환으로 확인되었다. 환자의 희귀질환진단 이후 시행된 가족 3인 이내 유전검사에서 28가구(65.1%)에서 잠재적 보인자 또는 증상 전 고위험군으로 확인되었다. 2차발견 정보 제공에 대한 동의율은 99.0% (406/410)로 매우 높았으며, 동의자 중 16명(3.9%)에서 임상적으로 의미 있는 2차 유전자 변이가 확인되었다.

**결론:** 「찾아가는 희귀질환 진단지원 사업」은 거주지 내 의료 접근성 향상, 지역 간 희귀질환 진단 격차 해소, 적시 치료 연계, 고위험군의 조기 선별 및 예방관리 강화에 실질적인 임상적 효과를 확인할 수 있었다. 특히, 진단 결과에 따른 임상적 치료전략 수립, 가족 내 고위험군 선별, 2차발견 분석 등을 통해 정밀유전진단의 다각적 활용 가능성이 입증되었으며, 이러한 결과는 향후 유전체 기반 진단서비스의 지역 내 확대와 지속적 운영의 정책적 필요성을 시사한다.

**주요 검색어:** 희귀질환; 전장유전체염기서열분석; 진단; 치료

### 서 론

희귀질환은 현재까지 7,000여종 이상이 보고되고 있으며,

이 중 약 80%는 유전적 요인에 기인한다[1,2]. 전체 희귀질환의 약 75%는 영유아기에 발병하며, 30%는 조기 사망과 밀접하게 연관되어 있어, 조기 진단과 신속한 치료 개입이 환자 예

Received June 16, 2025 Revised August 7, 2025 Accepted August 18, 2025

\*Corresponding author: 전종근, Tel: +82-55-360-3158, E-mail: chongkun@pusan.ac.kr

Copyright © Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency



This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>) which permits unrestricted distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.



KDCA  
Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency

### 핵심요약

#### ① 이전에 알려진 내용은?

국내 희귀질환의 진단 인프라는 대부분 수도권에 집중되어 있어 거주지 내에서 희귀질환 진단 접근성 부족 현상으로 비 수도권에서의 고질적인 진단지연 문제가 발생하고 있다.

#### ② 새로이 알게 된 내용은?

「찾아가는 희귀질환 진단지원 사업」은 거주지 중심의 희귀질환 전문기관, 상급종합병원을 대상으로 희귀질환 진단검사 지원을 통해 환자의 거주지 내 의료 진단 접근성의 개선에 기여한다.

#### ③ 시사점은?

본 사업은 거주지 중심의 진단지원 체계 강화를 통해 희귀질환 조기 진단 실현과 지역 간 진단의료 불균형 해소를 통해 국가 희귀질환 관리체계의 실효성 재고에 기여할 수 있음을 시사한다.

후에 결정적인 영향을 미친다[1,3]. 그러나 희귀질환은 매우 드문 질환이기 때문에 경우에 따라서 기존 진단법으로는 진단이 어려워, 진단을 위해 여러 의료기관을 순회하며 진단지연을 겪는 이른바 ‘진단 여정’ 현상이 나타나고 있다[4]. 실제로 희귀질환 환자의 평균 진단 소요 기간은 대략 7년 이상에 달하며, 길게는 10년 이상 진단받지 못한 환자도 상당수에 이른다[5-7].

따라서 이러한 희귀질환 진단영역에서의 구조적 문제들을 해소하기 위해, 질병관리청은 「찾아가는 희귀질환 진단지원 사업」을 도입하였다. 본 사업은 희귀질환 환자가 원거리 이동 없이 거주지 내 희귀질환 전문기관 및 상급종합병원(참여 의료기관)을 방문하여, 전장유전체염기서열분석(whole genome sequencing, WGS)을 활용한 유전 진단 서비스를 통한 조기진단 및 검사해석을 받을 수 있도록 지원하고 있다. 이를 통해 환자의 지리적 의료 접근성을 높이는 동시에 WGS와 같은 정밀 유전체 분석기술을 도입함으로써 기존 진단법으로는 진단이 어려운 희귀질환의 진단율을 높이는 것을 함께 목표로 한

다[8-10]. 나아가 본 사업은 단순한 진단지원을 넘어, 조기 진단을 통한 적기 치료 연계, 가족 단위 유전자 검사에 기반한 잠재적 환자 및 보인자 선별을 통한 고위험군 관리 및 희귀질환 예방의료의 실질적 구현을 목표로 한다.

고위험군 관리를 위해서 본 사업에서는 분석 대상 유전체에서 본래 진단 목적과는 무관하게 발견된 유전자 변이인 ‘2차발견(secondary findings, SF)’에 대한 보고도 함께 이루어지고 있다. SF는 미국임상유전학회(American College of Medical Genetics and Genomics, ACMG)에서 제시한 권고 기준에 따라 보고되며, 현재는 ACMG SF v3.2 목록에 기반하여 심혈관 질환, 암, 대사질환 등 조기 개입이 가능한 81개 유전자의 병적 변이를 대상으로 한다[11]. 이러한 SF는 대상자 본인은 물론 가족에게도 질병 예방과 건강관리 측면에서 중요한 정보를 제공함으로써, 정밀의료 및 공중보건 차원의 가치가 강조되고 있다.

특히 최근 연구에서는 유전체 기반 진단이 환자맞춤형 치료제 개발의 가능성을 제시하고 있으며, 약 10%의 희귀질환 환자에서 맞춤형 치료 전략이 적용될 수 있음을 보고하고 있다[3]. 이에 따라 본 사업에서도 보다 정확한 희귀질환 진단과 치료 연계를 위하여 WGS를 중심으로 한 정밀 유전진단 기술을 도입하였다는 점에서 제도적 의미가 있다.

본 보고에서는 2024년도 「찾아가는 희귀질환 진단지원 사업」의 결과를 바탕으로, 사업을 통한 진단과 치료연계의 효용성과 타당성을 확인 및 고찰하고자 한다.

## 방 법

2024년 8월부터 질병관리청에서 지원하는 「찾아가는 희귀질환 진단지원 사업」을 통해 전국 23개 비수도권 소재 희귀질환 참여 의료기관에서 희귀질환 의심 환자 총 410명을 대상으로 검체를 채취하여 외부검사기관에서 WGS검사를 시행하였으며 다음과 같은 절차에 따라 진행되었다.

## 1. 대상자 선정 및 검체 채취

거주지 지역 참여 의료기관에 내원한 환자 중 희귀질환이 의심되는 경우, 의료진 상담 후 유전자검사 동의서, 인체유래물 기증 동의서, SF 동의서에 서면 동의한 대상자에 한하여 등록을 하였다. 검체는 말초혈액(peripheral blood), 혈액채취카드(dried blood spot card), 조직 DNA (tissue DNA) 등이 이용되었으며 채취된 검체는 지정된 외부 검사기관으로 전달되었다.

## 2. 전장유전체염기서열분석

수집된 검체는 외부 전문 검사기관에서 NovaSeq X plus (Illumina) 플랫폼을 이용한 150bp paired-end 방식으로 WGS가 수행되었다[12].

## 3. 진단보고서 생성·제공 및 후속 검사지원

진단보고서 생성은 양산부산대병원과 외부검사기관의 임상유전학전문의(3인), 진단검사의학전문의(1인), 생명정보학전문가(1인) 등으로 이루어진 진단보고서생성위원회의를 거쳐 확정되었으며, 결과는 질병관리청 질병보건통합관리시스템을 통해 의료진용 진단보고서와, 환자용 진단보고서를 업로드하여 제공이 되었다. 업로드된 의료진 및 환자용 진단보고서는 의뢰담당 의사에게 전달이 되어, 진료 시 환자 및 보호자에게 환자용 진단보고서를 전달 하였으며, 환자용 진단보고서에는 결과의 이해를 돕기 위한 용어 해설, 변이 정보 해석 방법 등이 추가되어 설명되었다. 이를 통해 환자와 보호자가 진단보고서를 보다 명확하게 이해하고, 향후 치료 및 관리 방향에 대해 의료진과 효과적으로 논의할 수 있도록 지원하였다.

WGS검사 이후 다음과 같은 추가 후속검사가 제공되었다:

1) 원인 유전자변이 검증: 생어 시퀀싱(Sanger sequencing), gap-PCR, RNA분석 등; 2) 부모 및 형제 3인 내외 가족유전검사를 지원하여 고위험군 선별.

## 4. 2차발견 보고

WGS와 함께, ACMG 권고(2023, v3.2)에 따라 질병 발생 위험이 높은 81개 유전자에 대한 SF 분석이 시행되었으며 [11], 사전 동의자(406명)에 한해 보고되었다.

## 결 과

### 1. WGS 대상자의 연령별 분포

WGS를 시행 받은 전체 410명의 희귀질환 환자 중 12세 미만 소아 환자가 235명(57.3%)으로 가장 높은 비율을 차지하였으며, 12세 이상 18세 미만 청소년 85명(20.7%), 성인(18세 이상) 90명(22.0%)으로 집계되었다.

### 2. 유전검사 전체 진단율 및 연령별 진단율 현황

전체 대상자 중 129명(31.5%)에서 유전자의 병인성 변이가 확인되었으며, 특히 소아 연령군(12세 미만)에서 전체 양성 사례의 80.6% (104/129)로 가장 높은 빈도를 차지하였다. 한편, 청소년 및 성인군의 진단율은 각각 15.5% (20/129) 및 3.9% (5/129)로 확인되었다.

### 3. WGS 소요기간

희귀질환 의심 환자로부터 검체 채취 후 최종 진단결과보고서 제공되기까지의 평균 소요 기간은 약 28일이었다.

### 4. 희귀질환 치료 연계 및 사회경제적 지원 효과

희귀유전질환 양성판정 환자 129명 중 39명(30.2%)에서는 치료약물(15명), 표적 식이요법(18명), 수술적 중재(6명) 등 임상적 치료 전략이 가능한 질환으로 확인되었다(표 1). 이들 환자들은 진단과 함께 조기 치료로의 연계가 가능하였으며, 이는 희귀질환 고위험군에 대한 선제적 개입 및 질병 관리의 효율성을 높이는 데 기여할 수 있다. 또한, 진단이 확정된 환자들 중 78.2% (101/129)는 국민건강보험공단의 산정특

표 1. 희귀질환별 치료적 접근법 현황

연번	질환군	질환명	임상적 치료전략
1	내분비, 영양 및 대사 질환	글리코젠축적병 1b형 A 프로피온산혈증	옥수수전분, 항생제, 과립구집락자극인자(G-CSF) 메트로니다졸항생제투여, 소듐벤조에이트, 바이오틴(Biotin) 투여, 식이요법(저단백식이)
2	선천기형, 변형 및 염색체이상	연골무형성증 엔젤만 증후군 차지 증후군  좌심형성부전증후군 제1형 신경섬유종증 누난 증후군	성장호르몬, 수술요법 메칠페니데이트, 케톤체유발식, 항경련제 수술적 교정(기관절개술, 심장결합, 입술갈림증), 호르몬대체요법, 보청기 와우이식 등 프로스타글란딘 E-1 (PGE-1)주사, 수술, 심장 이식 코셀루코 경구약물 성장호르몬: 노디트로핀
3	순환기계통 질환	모야모야병	항경련제, 수술요법(두개내외우회로형성술)
4	신경계통 질환	유전성 강직성 하반신마비  멜라스증후군  돌발성 운동유발 이상운동 블랙판-다이아몬드 증후군	근이완제-바클로펜(Baclofen), 티자니딘(Tizanidine), 단트롤렌(Dantrolene), 다아제팜(Diazepam), 클로나제팜(Clonazepam)  코엔자임 Q (coenzyme Q), L-아르기닌(L-arginine), L-카르니틴(levocarnitine)  항뇌전증제(페니토인, 카바마제핀)
5	혈액 및 조혈기관질환 및 면역 메커니즘을 침범한 특정장애	판코니빈혈 비스코트-얼드리치증후군	부신 코르티코스테로이드, 골수이식 스테로이드, 안드로겐, 조혈모세포이식 조혈모세포이식, 비장 절제술, 면역글로불린과 감마글로불린 공급, 아스피린
6	코드 없음	뇌-폐-갑상선 증후군  선천성 당화장애  미만성 페림프관종증  드라벡 증후군  동형접합 가족성 고콜레스테롤혈증  유전성 만성 췌장염  HNRNPU-관련 장애 부갑상선기능저하증-감각신경성 난청-신장 질환 증후군  OPHN1 관련 장애 RANBP2 관련 급성 뇌병증	갑상선제 복용, 테트라베나진(tetrabenazine), L-도파(levodopa)  만노오스 보충과 간 이식(Mannose supplementation and liver transplantation)  수술적 제거, 약물 치료(인터페론 알파, 스테로이드), 방사선 치료  항경련제치료와 케톤생성 식이요법, 카나비디올(cannabidiol) 복용 치료  HMG-CoA 환원효소 억제제, 담즙흡수 차단제, PCSK9 억제제  급성 췌장염 재발에 대한 수액치료, 통증조절, 영양공급, 췌장 외분비기능부전에 대한 췌장 효소 공급, 괴사조직 제거, 배액, 갑압술, 췌장 절제술  항경련제, 발프로산 나트륨(sodium valproate) 경구용칼슘제복용, 보청기, 인공와우이식  Fasudil 약물  고용량 스테로이드(High-dose steroids), IVIG, 기타 면 역억제제(other immuno suppressants)

G-CSF=granulocyte colony-stimulating factor; PGE-1=prostaglandin E1; IVIG=intravenous immunoglobulin.

례 적용 또는 희귀질환자 의료비 지원사업 등 국가 지원정책 사업에 연계되어, 보조기기·특수식이 지원 등 다양한 형태의 사회·경제적 지원을 통해 의료비 부담경감의 혜택을 받을 수 있었다.

### 5. 희귀질환 진단 후 관리 체계의 확장

희귀질환 진단 환자를 대상으로 한 가족 유전 상담 결과, 129가구 중 43가구(33.3%)가 1차 혈족 유전검사를 수용하였으며, 이 중 28가구(65.1%)에서 잠재적 보인자 또는 증상 전 고위험군이 확인되어 희귀질환 예방적 관리 접근의 필요성이 부각되었다.

### 6. 2차발견 분석 결과

본 연구에서는 전체 410명의 희귀질환 의심 환자 중 99.0%가 ACMG v3.2 권고에 따라 SF 정보 제공에 동의하였다. 동의자들은 유전체 분석을 통해 질환의 유전 양상에 따라 질병 발생 가능성이 높거나 임상적으로 중대한 위험이 명확한

경우, 추가적인 유전자 변이 분석을 받았으며, 해당 변이에 대해서는 생어 시퀀싱을 통한 변이 검증이 병행되었다.

분석 결과, 동의자 406명 중 3.9%에서 임상적으로 의미 있는 유전성 고위험 유전자 변이가 확인되었다. 이들 변이의 상당수는 심혈관 질환 및 유전성 암 등 조기 개입과 예방의 중요성이 높은 질환군에 해당하였다(표 2).

### 7. 진단 여정 기간 현황

본 사업 참여자 410명 중 양성 변이로 확인된 환자 가운데 증상 발현일이 명확히 확인된 107명을 분석한 결과, 평균 진단 소요 기간은 7.4년이였다. 진단까지의 소요 기간을 세부적으로 살펴보면, 증상 발현 후 1년 미만에 진단된 환자는 21명(19.6%), 1년 이상 5년 이하가 35명(32.7%), 6년 이상 10년 이하가 24명(22.4%), 10년 이상 소요된 경우가 27명(25.2%)으로 확인되었다(표 3).

표 2. 전장유전체염기서열분석 의뢰 사유 증상카테고리 및 질환별 2차발견 분류

증상카테고리	질환명	질환분류	2차발견 유전자	건수
피부질환	10형 부정맥유발성 우심실이형성증	심혈관질환	DSG2	1
내분비질환	1형 가족성 비후성 심근병증	심혈관질환	MYH7	1
	3형 가족성 고콜레스테롤혈증	심혈관질환	PCSK9	1
신경발달장애	1형 유전성 난소-유방암	암	BRCA1	1
	4형 린치증후군	암	PMS2	1
	1D형 확장성 심근병증	심혈관질환	TNNT2	1
신경질환	1G형 확장성 심근병증	심혈관질환	TTN	4
	4형 가족성 비후성 심근병증	심혈관질환	MYBPC3	3
종양 증후군	2형 로이-디에츠 증후군	심혈관질환	TGFBR2	1
	5형 린치증후군	암	MSH6	2

표 3. 진단 소요 기간 분포(희귀유전질환판정)

전체	기간(년)							
	<1	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	≥31
107 (100)	21 (19.6)	35 (32.7)	24 (22.4)	10 (9.3)	6 (5.6)	8 (7.5)	0 (0.0)	3 (2.8)

단위: 명(%)

## 논 의

본 사업은 「제2차 희귀질환관리 종합계획(2022-2026)」의 전략 목표에 따라, 희귀질환 환자와 가족에 대한 지원을 강화하고 효과적인 희귀질환 관리체계 구축을 위한 핵심 사업으로 추진되었다. 특히, 비수도권 거주 환자와 가족을 대상으로 진단 고효율성의 WGS를 활용해 거주지 중심의 원스톱 희귀질환 진단지원 서비스 제공이 지역 의료현장에서 실현 가능한 유용한 모델임을 실증적으로 검증하고자 하였다.

전체 410명의 희귀질환 의심환자를 대상으로 시행된 전장 유전체염기서열 기반 유전체 분석 결과, 12세 미만 소아 환자 연령군에서 WGS검사가 가장 많이 의뢰가 되었으며(57.3%), 또한 검사를 시행 받은 전체 환자들 중 희귀질환 유전진단율은 약 31.5%로 확인되었으며, 특히 소아 연령군에서 전체 진단사례의 80.6%를 차지하였다. 이는 소아 연령군에서의 희귀질환 진단수요가 가장 높을 뿐만 아니라 희귀질환 조기 진단 검사의 비용대비 효율성과 지원 필요성을 강조할 수 있을 것으로 보인다.

또한, 검사를 의뢰한 의료인이 최종 진단결과보고서를 받기까지 평균 소요기간이 28일로 매우 단축 되었으며 이로 인해 유전진단의 지연을 최소화 하는 데 기여 할 수 있었다.

본 사업을 통해 희귀질환으로 진단받은 환자들의 상당수

는 건강보험 산정특례 및 희귀질환자 의료비 지원사업 등 국가 정책과 연계되어 실질적인 사회·경제적 지원을 제공받을 수 있게 되었는데, 특히 양성 진단 환자의 약 30%는 치료제, 식이요법 등의 치료법이 존재하는 질환으로 확인되어, 본 사업이 단순 진단지원의 의료적 차원을 넘어 조기 치료 연계, 환자-가족의 사회경제적 부담 완화, 임상적 예후 개선에도 기여할 수 있음을 보여주었다. 또한, 가족 단위의 유전검사 지원은 잠재적 고위험군의 조기 선별 및 예방적 개입 체계 마련에도 중요한 역할을 할 것으로 기대된다.

SF 분석결과의 경우 희귀질환 환자의 3.9%에서 확인이 되었는데, 이는 기존 국내 대규모 유전체 연구에서 보고된 SF빈도(3.75%)와 유사하며[13], WGS 기반 진단 과정에서 예기치 않게 확인된 병인성 유전변이가 임상적으로 실질적인 의미를 가질 수 있음을 시사하며, SF결과는 질병 발현 가능성이 있는 보인자에 대한 주기적 임상 모니터링 및 가족 구성원 전체를 아우르는 예방적 건강관리 전략과 국내임상 가이드라인개발의 실질적 근거로 활용될 수 있을 것이다[14].

한편, WGS검사를 통해 진단된 환자들의 평균 진단 소요기간이 7.4년임을 고려했을 때, 희귀질환 환자들이 초기 증상 발현 이후 적절한 진단을 받기까지 장기간의 진단 여정을 겪고 있음을 보여준다. 특히, 4분의 1에 해당하는 환자들이 10년 이상 진단을 받지 못한 채 방치되어 있었던 점은, 비수도

표 4. 지역별 검사 의뢰 현황 및 비율(N=410)

구분	의료기관 수	검사수(명)	비율(%)	권역 기관 평균의뢰(건)
총계	23	410	100.0	-
강원권	1	34	8.30	34
경남동부권	6	101	24.60	17
경남서부권	2	62	15.10	31
경북권	5	28	6.80	6
세종권	1	6	1.50	6
전남권	1	38	9.30	38
전북권	2	50	12.20	25
제주권	1	13	3.20	13
충남권	3	38	9.30	13
충북권	1	40	9.80	40

권 지역 등에서의 의료 접근성 부족 및 유전학적 진단 체계의 한계를 시사한다. 따라서 이러한 결과는 희귀질환 환자에 대한 신속하고 정확한 유전학적 진단 체계 구축의 지속 필요성을 뒷받침하며, 진단지연으로 인한 치료 기회 상실을 방지하기 위한 정책적·제도적 보완의 중요성을 뒷받침하는 근거가 될 수 있을 것이다.

다만, 본 사업에서 전장유전체염기서열 기반 진단검사를 통해서도 미진단된 환자들에 대해서는 주기적 재분석(reanalysis), trio-기반 WGS, RNA 또는 long read-시퀀싱과 같은 추가적인 진단지원 연계 방안 모색이 필요할 것이다. 이러한 접근은 기존 분석 방법으로 진단되지 않는 희귀질환의 유전적 기전을 규명하기 위해 국제적으로도 활발히 수행되고 있으며, 다양한 연구에서 새로운 질병 메커니즘을 밝히기 위한 효과적인 전략으로 보고되고 있다[15-17].

결론적으로, 「찾아가는 희귀질환 진단지원 사업」은 진단 인프라의 지역적 편중 문제 해소를 통해, 어느 지역에서나 거주지 내 희귀질환 의심환자가 조기에 진단을 받을 수 있는 환경을 마련할 수 있고, 이를 통해 치료 연계, 가족 고위험군의 선제적 관리 등 국내 희귀질환 관리체계 내 실효성 있는 정책 모델로서의 가능성을 보여주었다.

특히, 모든 검사 참여자가 비수도권 소재 의료기관을 통해 진단에 접근하였다는 점에서, 본 사업은 지역 간 진단 접근성 격차를 실질적으로 완화하고 형평성을 개선하는 데 기여한 점에서 중요한 의의를 지닌다(표 4).

## Declarations

**Ethics Statement:** Not applicable.

**Funding Source:** This study was funded by the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency grant (6500-6544-306).

**Acknowledgments:** None.

**Conflict of Interest:** The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

**Author Contributions:** Conceptualization: CKC. Data curation: YEL. Formal analysis: YEL. Funding acquisition: CKC. Investigation: YEL. Methodology: CKC. Project administration: CKC. Resources: CKC. Supervision: CKC. Validation: CKC. Visualization: YEL. Writing – original draft: YEL. Writing – review & editing: JYK, JKC, YBK, CKC.

## References

1. The Lancet Global Health. The landscape for rare diseases in 2024. *Lancet Glob Health* 2024;12:e341.
2. Haendel M, Vasilevsky N, Unni D, et al. How many rare diseases are there? *Nat Rev Drug Discov* 2020;19:77-8.
3. Kim J, Woo S, de Gusmao CM, et al. A framework for individualized splice-switching oligonucleotide therapy. *Nature* 2023;619:828-36.
4. Faye F, Crocione C, Anido de Peña R, et al. Time to diagnosis and determinants of diagnostic delays of people living with a rare disease: results of a rare barometer retrospective patient survey. *Eur J Hum Genet* 2024;1-11.
5. Siegel IJ, Vaithilingam SL, Hartig MM, Patty EC, Mantsch LE, Garrison SR. Diagnostic delays in rare genetic disorders with neuropsychiatric manifestations: a systematic review. *Eur J Med Genet* 2025;75:105016.
6. Shire. Rare Disease Impact Report: Insights from Patients and the Medical Community [Internet]. Shire; 2013 [cited 2025 Apr 30]. Available from: <https://globalgenes.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/ShireReport-1.pdf>
7. Jeong SG. Rare diseases: “diagnostic odyssey” can exceed 10 years... Special dietary therapy or tests, if available, are a relief. *JoongAng Health Media* [Internet]. 2020 Feb 28 [cited 2025 Apr 30]. Available from: <https://jhealthmedia.joins.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=21451>
8. Lim JG. Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency to double the scale of the 2025 rare disease diagnosis support program. *Medical World News* [Internet]. 2025 Mar 18 [cited 2025 Apr 30]. Available from: <https://medicalworld-news.co.kr/news/view.php?idx=1510966473>
9. Lee SD. ‘Rare Disease Diagnosis Support Program’ identi-

- fies 129 patients early. *Medical News* [Internet]. 2025 Mar 18 [cited 2025 Apr 30]. Available from: <https://www.bosa.co.kr/news/articleView.html?idxno=2244213>
10. Choi KS. 2025 Rare Disease Diagnosis Support Program officially launched. *Hospital News* [Internet]. 2025 Mar 18 [cited 2025 Apr 30]. Available from: <https://www.khanews.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=232450>
  11. Miller DT, Lee K, Abul-Husn NS, et al. ACMG SF v3.1 list for reporting of secondary findings in clinical exome and genome sequencing: a policy statement of the American College of Medical Genetics and Genomics (ACMG). *Genet Med* 2022;24:1407-14.
  12. Ng HY, Ma W, Lam WJ, et al. Identification of technically challenging variants: whole-genome sequencing improves diagnostic yield in patients with high clinical suspicion of rare diseases. *HGG Adv* 2025;6:100469.
  13. Kim Y, Kim JM, Cho HW, Park HY, Park MH. Frequency of actionable secondary findings in 7472 Korean genomes derived from the National Project of Bio Big Data pilot study. *Hum Genet* 2023;142:1561-9.
  14. Katz AE, Nussbaum RL, Solomon BD, Rehm HL, Williams MS, Biesecker LG. Management of secondary genomic findings. *Am J Hum Genet* 2020;107:3-14.
  15. Boycott KM, Rath A, Chong JX, et al. International cooperation to enable the diagnosis of all rare genetic diseases. *Am J Hum Genet* 2017;100:695-705.
  16. Best S, Fehlberg Z, Richards C, et al. Reanalysis of genomic data in rare disease: current practice and attitudes among Australian clinical and laboratory genetics services. *Eur J Hum Genet* 2024;32:1428-35.
  17. Larizza L, Watson CM, Gillentine MA, Finelli P. Editorial: the clinical utility of long read sequencing to improve diagnostic yield and uncover biological mechanisms in rare disease. *Front Genet* 2024;15:1494860.

## Policy Note

# Achievements and Expectations of the Rare Disease Diagnostic Support Program in the Republic of Korea

Ye Eun Lee<sup>1</sup> , Jee Young Kim<sup>2</sup> , Jun Kil Choi<sup>2</sup> , Young Bae Kim<sup>2</sup> , Chong Kun Cheon<sup>3\*</sup> 

<sup>1</sup>Division of Medical Research Institute, Pusan National University, Busan, Korea, <sup>2</sup>Division of Rare Disease Management, Department of Chronic Disease Prevention and Control, Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency, Cheongju, Korea, <sup>3</sup>Division of Medical Genetics Clinic, Center for Rare Diseases, Department of Pediatrics, Pusan National University School of Medicine, Busan, Korea

## ABSTRACT

**Objectives:** The Rare Disease Diagnostic Support Program in the Republic of Korea aims to improve early diagnosis and diagnostic yield for patients with rare diseases, particularly for those residing in non-metropolitan areas, by providing whole genome sequencing (WGS) services through regional medical institutions. This study evaluated the performance of the program, focusing on its clinical utility, including early diagnosis and treatment linkage, and its policy impact related to patient benefits.

**Methods:** From August 2024, WGS was performed on 410 patients with suspected rare diseases at 23 institutions outside the metropolitan area. A one-stop diagnostic pathway was established to perform sample collection, test referral, report delivery, and genetic counseling within a single clinical flow based on the patient's location of residence. Sequencing was performed by external laboratories.

**Results:** Among the 410 patients, pathogenic variants were identified in 129 (31.5%), with a turnaround time of 28 days. Of those diagnosed, 78.2% received treatment benefits via national programs such as co-payment exemption and medical expense support programs. Approximately 30% of the patients were eligible for therapeutic intervention, particularly medication or dietary therapy. Family genetic testing of three members identified potential carriers or high-risk groups in 28 households (65.1%). Consent for secondary findings was 99.0%, with clinically significant variants found in 3.9% of cases.

**Conclusions:** The program demonstrated clinical value by improving diagnostic accessibility, reducing regional disparities, facilitating timely treatment, and supporting preventive care through family risk identification. These findings support the need for sustainable expansion of genome-based diagnostic services in the national health policy.

**Key words:** Rare disease; Whole genome sequencing; Diagnosis; Treatment

\*Corresponding author: Chong Kun Cheon, Tel: +82-55-360-3158, E-mail: chongkun@pusan.ac.kr

## Introduction

Currently, more than 7,000 rare diseases have been

reported, and approximately 80% of these are caused by genetic factors [1,2]. Approximately 75% of rare diseases manifest in infancy, and 30% are associated with premature death.

### Key messages

#### ① What is known previously?

In the Republic of Korea, the diagnostic infrastructure for rare diseases is primarily concentrated in metropolitan areas, resulting in chronic diagnostic delays and limited access to diagnostic services for patients in non-metropolitan regions.

#### ② What new information is presented?

The Rare Disease Diagnostic Support Program in the Republic of Korea has improved diagnostic accessibility by supporting genetic testing for rare diseases at specialized regional centers and tertiary hospitals.

#### ③ What are the implications?

This program suggests that strengthening community-based diagnostic support systems can facilitate earlier diagnosis, reduce regional disparities in rare disease care, and enhance the effectiveness of national rare disease management systems.

Therefore, early diagnosis and prompt treatment are crucial for patient prognosis [1,3]. The diagnosis of rare diseases, however, is difficult owing to their rarity, and in some cases, conventional diagnostic methods may fail to identify them. Therefore, patients often have to visit multiple healthcare facilities to obtain a diagnosis, resulting in a phenomenon known as the “diagnostic journey” [4]. The mean diagnostic delay in cases of rare diseases is approximately 7 years, with a considerable proportion of patients remaining undiagnosed for more than a decade [5-7].

Therefore, to resolve structural problems in the diagnosis of rare diseases, the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency (KDCA) introduced the “Outreach Support Program for the Diagnosis of Rare Diseases.” This program provides support to patients with rare diseases by enabling them to visit

a rare disease center or advanced general hospital in their area without having to travel long distances, where they can receive an early diagnosis and test interpretations through genetic diagnosis services utilizing whole genome sequencing (WGS). The aim of this program is to enhance geographical access to healthcare for patients while introducing precision genomic testing technologies such as WGS to increase the diagnosis rate for rare diseases that are difficult to diagnose using conventional methods [8-10]. Furthermore, this program is intended to provide more than just diagnostic support and seeks to connect patients with timely treatment through early diagnosis, management of high-risk groups by screening potential patients and carriers based on family-based genetic testing, and effective implementation of preventive healthcare for rare diseases.

To address the management of high-risk groups, this program also reports on “secondary findings (SF),” gene variants discovered in the analyzed genome that are unrelated to the original diagnostic purpose. Any SF is reported in accordance with the recommended criteria presented by the American College of Medical Genetics and Genomics (ACMG) and is currently based on the ACMG SF v3.2 list, targeting 81 genes with pathogenic variants that enable early intervention for cardiovascular disease, cancer, metabolic disorders, and other conditions [11]. SFs play a pivotal role in disease prevention and health management, offering invaluable insights not only to patients but also to their families, which underscores their significance in precision medicine and public health.

Recent studies have indicated the potential for genome-based diagnostics to facilitate the development of personalized therapies, with reports indicating that personalized treatment strategies can be applied to approximately 10% of patients with rare diseases [3]. Consequently, this program holds significant

institutional value owing to its introduction of precision genetic diagnosis technology centered on WGS, facilitating more precise diagnosis and treatment of rare diseases. This report aims to identify and examine the effectiveness and validity of diagnosis and treatment coordination through the program, based on the results of the 2024 Outreach Support Program for the Diagnosis of Rare Diseases.

## Methods

In August 2024, the KDCA-supported Outreach Support Program for the Diagnosis of Rare Diseases initiated a nationwide selection process, identifying a total of 410 patients suspected of having rare diseases from 23 rare disease centers and tertiary hospitals situated beyond the Seoul metropolitan area (hereinafter referred to as participating healthcare institutions). Samples were collected and subsequently subjected to WGS at external testing institutions, in accordance with the following procedures.

### 1. Selection of Participants and Sample Collection

Among patients who visited participating healthcare institutions in their area of residence and were suspected of having a rare disease, only those who provided written consent on the genetic testing consent form, human biological material donation consent form, and SF consent form after consultation with healthcare providers were enrolled in the program. The samples used were peripheral blood, dried blood spot cards, and tissue DNA. The collected samples were sent to designated external testing institutions.

### 2. Whole Genome Sequencing

The collected samples were then subjected to WGS using the NovaSeq X Plus (Illumina) platform with a 150-base pair paired-end approach at external specialized testing institutions [12].

### 3. Generation and Provision of Diagnostic Reports and Follow-up Testing Support

The diagnostic reports were generated by a diagnostic report generation committee comprising three clinical geneticists, one diagnostic laboratory specialist, and one bioinformatics specialist from Pusan National University Yangsan Hospital and external testing institutions. The results were subsequently uploaded to the Integrated Disease Control System of the KDCA, where they were made available as diagnostic reports for healthcare providers and patients. The uploaded diagnostic reports for healthcare providers and patients were then forwarded to the referring doctors, who subsequently provided the diagnostic reports to patients and their guardians during consultations. The diagnostic reports for patients included additional explanations of terms to facilitate comprehension of the results and methods for interpreting variant information. This facilitates patient and family understanding of diagnostic reports, enabling effective communication with healthcare providers regarding future treatment and management plans.

The additional follow-up tests provided after WGS were as follows: 1) verification of causative gene variants by methods including Sanger sequencing, gap-polymerase chain reaction, and RNA testing; and 2) screening for high-risk groups by supporting genetic testing for parents and siblings (up to three people).

#### 4. Report on SFs

In conjunction with WGS, SF analysis was conducted on 81 genes with an elevated disease risk, as delineated by the ACMG recommendations (2023, v3.2) [11]. This analysis was restricted to individuals who had previously provided consent (n=406).

## Results

#### 1. Age Distribution of Individuals Tested by WGS

Among the 410 patients with rare diseases who were tested by WGS, pediatric patients under the age of 12 years accounted for the highest percentage (n=235, 57.3%), followed by adolescents aged 12–18 years (n=85, 20.7%) and adults aged 18 years and older (n=90, 22.0%).

#### 2. Status of Overall Diagnosis and Diagnosis Rates by Age for Genetic Testing

Pathogenic gene variants were identified in 129 (31.5%) participants, with the highest frequency noted in the pediatric age group (under 12 years of age), accounting for 80.6% (104/129) of all positive cases. The diagnostic rates for adolescents and adults were determined to be 15.5% (20/129) and 3.9% (5/129), respectively.

#### 3. Time Required for WGS

The mean interval from specimen collection from patients suspected of having rare diseases to the delivery of the final diagnostic report was approximately 28 days.

#### 4. Effectiveness of Rare Disease Treatment Coordination and Socioeconomic Support

Among the 129 patients diagnosed with rare genetic diseases, 39 (30.2%) were confirmed to have diseases for which clinical treatment strategies were available, such as therapeutic drugs (15), targeted diets (18), and surgical interventions (6) (Table 1). The capacity for these patients to receive early treatment upon diagnosis indicates the potential for proactive intervention and more efficient disease management for high-risk groups with rare diseases. Furthermore, 78.2% (101/129) of patients with a confirmed diagnosis were referred to national support programs, such as the National Health Insurance Service's special assessment system or healthcare expense support program for patients with rare diseases. These patients received various forms of social and economic support, including assistive devices and special diets, to reduce their healthcare expenses.

#### 5. Expansion of the Management System after Rare Disease Diagnoses

In family genetic counseling conducted for patients diagnosed with rare diseases, 33.3% (43/129) consented to primary genetic testing, and among them, 28 households (65.1%) were identified as potential carriers or high-risk groups before symptom manifestation, underscoring the necessity for preventive management approaches for rare diseases.

#### 6. SF Analysis Results

In this study, 99.0% of the 410 patients suspected of having a rare disease consented to the provision of SF information in accordance with the ACMG v3.2 guidelines. Participants who consented to participate underwent additional genetic

**Table 1.** Current therapeutic approaches by rare disease category

No.	Disease group	Disease name	Clinical therapeutic strategy
1	Endocrine, nutritional, and metabolic diseases	Glycogen storage disease 1b type A Propionic acidemia	Cornstarch, antibiotics, G-CSF Metronidazole antibiotics, sodium benzoate, biotin supplementation, dietary therapy (low-protein diet)
2	Congenital malformations, deformations, and chromosomal abnormalities	Achondroplasia Angelman syndrome CHARGE syndrome Hypoplastic left heart syndrome Neurofibromatosis (nonmalignant) type 1 Noonan syndrome	Growth hormone, surgical treatment Methylphenidate, ketogenic diet, antiepileptic drugs Surgical correction (tracheostomy, heart defects, cleft lip), hormone replacement therapy, hearing aids, cochlear implant PGE-1 injection, surgery, heart transplantation Koselugo (selumetinib) oral medication Growth hormone: norditropin
3	Circulatory system diseases	Moyamoya disease	Antiepileptic drugs, surgical treatment (extracranial-intracranial bypass)
4	Nervous system diseases	Hereditary spastic paraplegia MELAS syndrome PKD	Muscle relaxants: baclofen, tizanidine, dantrolene, diazepam, clonazepam Coenzyme Q, L-arginine, levocarnitine Antiepileptic drugs: phenytoin, carbamazepine
5	Disorders of blood, hematopoietic organs, and immune mechanisms	Blackfan-Diamond syndrome Fanconi's anaemia Wiskott-Aldrich syndrome	Adrenal corticosteroids, bone marrow transplantation Steroids, androgens, hematopoietic stem cell transplantation Hematopoietic stem cell transplantation, splenectomy, immunoglobulin and gamma globulin administration, aspirin
6	Uncoded	Brain-lung-thyroid syndrome Congenital disorder of glycosylation Diffuse pulmonary lymphangiomatosis Dravet syndrome Familial hypercholesterolemia homozygote Hereditary chronic pancreatitis HNRNPU-related disorder HDR syndrome OPHN1-related disorder RANBP2 related acute encephalopathy	Thyroid hormone administration, tetrabenazine, levodopa Mannose supplementation, liver transplantation Surgical removal, pharmacological therapy (interferon-alpha, steroids), radiation therapy Antiepileptic drug therapy, ketogenic diet, CBD treatment HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors, bile acid sequestrants, PCSK9 inhibitors Fluid therapy for recurrent acute pancreatitis, pain control, nutritional support, pancreatic enzyme replacement, necrosectomy, drainage, decompression, pancreatectomy Antiepileptic drugs, sodium valproate Oral calcium supplements, hearing aids, cochlear implantation Fasudil High-dose steroids, IVIG, other immunosuppressants

PKD=paroxysmal kinesigenic dyskinesia; HDR=hypoparathyroidism-sensorineural deafness-renal disease; G-CSF=granulocyte colony-stimulating factor; PGE-1=prostaglandin E1; CBD=cannabidiol; IVIG=intravenous immunoglobulin.

testing for disease-causing or clinically significant variants identified through genome sequencing. These variants were also verified by Sanger sequencing. The analysis revealed clinically significant genetic variants associated with high risk in 3.9% of the 406 participants who provided consent. A considerable proportion of these variants have been associated with disease groups that necessitate prompt intervention and prevention measures, including cardiovascular disease and hereditary cancer (Table 2).

### 7. Status of the Diagnostic Journey Period

Among the 410 participants who participated in this program, 107 patients with positive variants and clearly identified symptom onset dates were analyzed, yielding an average diagnosis period of 7.4 years. A detailed examination of the

duration until diagnosis revealed that 21 patients (19.6%) were diagnosed within less than 1 year after symptom onset, 35 (32.7%) were diagnosed within 1–5 years, 24 (22.4%) were diagnosed within 6–10 years, and 27 (25.2%) were diagnosed after 10 years (Table 3).

### Discussion

The Outreach Support Program for the Diagnosis of Rare Diseases was launched as a core initiative to strengthen support for patients with rare diseases and their families and establish an effective rare disease management system, in accordance with the strategic objectives of the Second Comprehensive Rare Disease Management Plan (2022–2026). This study aimed to empirically validate the efficacy of a one-stop rare disease

**Table 2.** Categories of symptoms and secondary findings by disease based on whole genome sequencing requests

Symptom category	Disease name	Disease classification	SF gene	Number of cases
Dermatological disorders	Arrhythmogenic right ventricular dysplasia type 10	Cardiovascular	<i>DSG2</i>	1
Endocrine disorders	Familial hypertrophic cardiomyopathy type 1	Cardiovascular	<i>MYH7</i>	1
	Familial hypercholesterolemia type 3	Cardiovascular	<i>PCSK9</i>	1
Neurodevelopmental disorder	Hereditary breast and ovarian cancer syndrome type 1	Cancer	<i>BRCA1</i>	1
	Lynch syndrome type 4	Cancer	<i>PMS2</i>	1
	Dilated cardiomyopathy type 1D	Cardiovascular	<i>TNNT2</i>	1
	Dilated cardiomyopathy type 1G	Cardiovascular	<i>TTN</i>	4
Neurology disorder	Familial hypertrophic cardiomyopathy type 4	Cardiovascular	<i>MYBPC3</i>	3
	Loeys-Dietz syndrome type 2	Cardiovascular	<i>TGFBR2</i>	1
Tumor syndrome	Lynch syndrome type 5	Cancer	<i>MSH6</i>	2

SF=secondary findings.

**Table 3.** Distribution of time required for diagnosis (determination of rare genetic disease)

Total	Period (yr)							
	<1	1–5	6–10	11–15	16–20	21–25	26–30	≥31
107 (100)	21 (19.6)	35 (32.7)	24 (22.4)	10 (9.3)	6 (5.6)	8 (7.5)	0 (0.0)	3 (2.8)

Unit: n (%).

diagnosis support service that utilizes highly efficient WGS for patients and their families living outside of the Seoul metropolitan area, thereby demonstrating that such a service is feasible in local medical settings.

Because of WGS-based genetic testing conducted for a total of 410 patients suspected of having rare diseases, WGS was most frequently requested for pediatric patients under the age of 12 years (57.3%). The genetic diagnosis rate for rare diseases was verified to be approximately 31.5% for all patients who underwent testing, accounting for 80.6% of all diagnosed cases in the pediatric age group. This highlights not only the high demand for rare disease diagnosis in the pediatric age group but also the cost-effectiveness and necessity of support for early diagnosis of rare diseases. In addition, the average time required for the healthcare providers who requested the tests to receive the final diagnostic reports was significantly reduced to 28 days, thereby contributing to minimizing delays in genetic diagnosis.

The program provided practical social and economic support through national policies such as special health insurance coverage and healthcare expense assistance for patients with rare diseases to a substantial number of patients diagnosed with rare diseases. Specifically, approximately 30% of patients with positive results were found to have conditions for which treatment methods such as medication and diet therapy exist, suggesting that this program could contribute to early treatment coordination, alleviate the socioeconomic burden on patients and their families, and improve clinical prognosis, going beyond the medical dimension of simple diagnostic support. Genetic testing support for families is also expected to play an important role in establishing a system for early screening and preventive intervention for potential high-risk groups.

The SF analysis results were obtained from 3.9% of patients with rare diseases, which was similar to the SF frequency (3.75%) reported in previous large-scale genome studies in the Republic of Korea [13]. The unexpected findings of pathogenic genetic variants during the WGS-based diagnosis process may have practical clinical significance. The SFs can be used as practical evidence for developing preventive health management strategies that include periodic clinical monitoring of carriers with a potential risk of disease onset and all family members, as well as domestic clinical guidelines [14].

Meanwhile, considering that the average time required for diagnosis of patients diagnosed through WGS was 7.4 years, it seems that patients with rare diseases undergo a long diagnostic journey until obtaining an appropriate diagnosis after the onset of initial symptoms. A particularly salient finding was that a quarter of patients remained undiagnosed for more than 10 years, suggesting limited access to healthcare in regions outside the Seoul metropolitan area and limitations in the genetic diagnosis system. Consequently, these findings underscore the ongoing necessity of a swift and precise genetic diagnostic system for patients with rare diseases. Moreover, they offer substantiation for the imperative of policy and institutional enhancements aimed at averting the forfeiture of treatment opportunities due to protracted diagnostic delays.

However, for patients who remain undiagnosed even through WGS-based diagnostic testing in this program, it will be necessary to pursue additional diagnostic support measures such as periodic reanalysis, trio-based WGS, RNA sequencing, and long-read sequencing. This approach is currently being pursued on an international scale to identify the genetic mechanisms of rare diseases that cannot be diagnosed using existing testing methods. Numerous studies have reported this

**Table 4.** Number and proportion of test requests by region (N=410)

Region	No. of medical institutions	No. of tests	Proportion (%)	Average requests per institution
Total	23	410	100.0	-
Gangwon	1	34	8.30	34
Gyeongnam East	6	101	24.60	17
Gyeongnam West	2	62	15.10	31
Gyeongbuk	5	28	6.80	6
Sejong	1	6	1.50	6
Jeonnam	1	38	9.30	38
Jeonbuk	2	50	12.20	25
Jeju	1	13	3.20	13
Chungnam	3	38	9.30	13
Chungbuk	1	40	9.80	40

approach as an effective strategy for elucidating new disease mechanisms [15-17].

In conclusion, the Outreach Support Program for the Diagnosis of Rare Diseases has demonstrated the potential to serve as an effective policy model within the domestic rare disease management system by addressing regional disparities in diagnostic infrastructure. This program facilitates early diagnosis for patients suspected of having rare diseases, regardless of their place of residence. Consequently, treatment coordination and proactive management of high-risk families are enabled. It is noteworthy that all participants in the screening program accessed diagnostic services through healthcare institutions located outside the Seoul metropolitan area. This program is significant in that it contributed to the substantial reduction of regional disparities in access to diagnosis and to improvement in equity (Table 4).

## Declarations

**Ethics Statement:** Not applicable.

**Funding Source:** This study was funded by the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency grant (6500-6544-

306).

**Acknowledgments:** None.

**Conflict of Interest:** The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

**Author Contributions:** Conceptualization: CKC. Data curation: YEL. Formal analysis: YEL. Funding acquisition: CKC. Investigation: YEL. Methodology: CKC. Project administration: CKC. Resources: CKC. Supervision: CKC. Validation: CKC. Visualization: YEL. Writing – original draft: YEL. Writing – review & editing: JYK, JKC, YBK, CKC.

## References

1. The Lancet Global Health. The landscape for rare diseases in 2024. *Lancet Glob Health* 2024;12:e341.
2. Haendel M, Vasilevsky N, Unni D, et al. How many rare diseases are there? *Nat Rev Drug Discov* 2020;19:77-8.
3. Kim J, Woo S, de Gusmao CM, et al. A framework for individualized splice-switching oligonucleotide therapy. *Nature* 2023;619:828-36.
4. Faye F, Crocione C, Anido de Peña R, et al. Time to diagnosis and determinants of diagnostic delays of people living with a rare disease: results of a rare barometer retrospective patient survey. *Eur J Hum Genet* 2024:1-11.
5. Siegel IJ, Vaithilingam SL, Hartig MM, Patty EC, Mantsch LE, Garrison SR. Diagnostic delays in rare genetic disor-

- ders with neuropsychiatric manifestations: a systematic review. *Eur J Med Genet* 2025;75:105016.
6. Shire. Rare Disease Impact Report: Insights from Patients and the Medical Community [Internet]. Shire; 2013 [cited 2025 Apr 30]. Available from: <https://globalgenes.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/ShireReport-1.pdf>
  7. Jeong SG. Rare diseases: “diagnostic odyssey” can exceed 10 years... Special dietary therapy or tests, if available, are a relief. *JoongAng Health Media* [Internet]. 2020 Feb 28 [cited 2025 Apr 30]. Available from: <https://jhealthmedia.joins.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=21451>
  8. Lim JG. Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency to double the scale of the 2025 rare disease diagnosis support program. *Medical World News* [Internet]. 2025 Mar 18 [cited 2025 Apr 30]. Available from: <https://medicalworld-news.co.kr/news/view.php?idx=1510966473>
  9. Lee SD. ‘Rare Disease Diagnosis Support Program’ identifies 129 patients early. *Medical News* [Internet]. 2025 Mar 18 [cited 2025 Apr 30]. Available from: <https://www.bosa.co.kr/news/articleView.html?idxno=2244213>
  10. Choi KS. 2025 Rare Disease Diagnosis Support Program officially launched. *Hospital News* [Internet]. 2025 Mar 18 [cited 2025 Apr 30]. Available from: <https://www.khanews.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=232450>
  11. Miller DT, Lee K, Abul-Husn NS, et al. ACMG SF v3.1 list for reporting of secondary findings in clinical exome and genome sequencing: a policy statement of the American College of Medical Genetics and Genomics (ACMG). *Genet Med* 2022;24:1407-14.
  12. Ng HY, Ma W, Lam WJ, et al. Identification of technically challenging variants: whole-genome sequencing improves diagnostic yield in patients with high clinical suspicion of rare diseases. *HGG Adv* 2025;6:100469.
  13. Kim Y, Kim JM, Cho HW, Park HY, Park MH. Frequency of actionable secondary findings in 7472 Korean genomes derived from the National Project of Bio Big Data pilot study. *Hum Genet* 2023;142:1561-9.
  14. Katz AE, Nussbaum RL, Solomon BD, Rehm HL, Williams MS, Biesecker LG. Management of secondary genomic findings. *Am J Hum Genet* 2020;107:3-14.
  15. Boycott KM, Rath A, Chong JX, et al. International cooperation to enable the diagnosis of all rare genetic diseases. *Am J Hum Genet* 2017;100:695-705.
  16. Best S, Fehlberg Z, Richards C, et al. Reanalysis of genomic data in rare disease: current practice and attitudes among Australian clinical and laboratory genetics services. *Eur J Hum Genet* 2024;32:1428-35.
  17. Larizza L, Watson CM, Gillentine MA, Finelli P. Editorial: the clinical utility of long read sequencing to improve diagnostic yield and uncover biological mechanisms in rare disease. *Front Genet* 2024;15:1494860.