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NARRATIVE REVIEW ON THE IMPACT OF GENE MUTATIONS IN DISEASE SUSCEPTIBILITY, PROGRESSION, AND TARGETED THERAPEUTIC APPROACHES

Narrative review.

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ABSTRACT

Background: The elucidation of the human genome has fundamentally transformed our understanding of disease etiology, positioning gene mutations as central players in susceptibility, pathogenesis, and progression across a vast spectrum of human disorders. The translation of this genetic knowledge into targeted therapeutic strategies represents the cornerstone of precision medicine, heralding a new era in clinical management.

Objective: This narrative review aims to synthesize the current landscape of how specific gene mutations influence disease development and progression, and to explore how these discoveries are shaping the development and application of novel, targeted therapeutic approaches.

Main Discussion Points: The review thematically explores the paradigm of oncogenic mutations in driving targeted cancer therapies, such as tyrosine kinase inhibitors and PARP inhibitors, while also examining the role of germline mutations in hereditary cancer syndromes. It further expands into non-oncological domains, including cardiology and neurology, highlighting the development of treatments like PCSK9 inhibitors and antisense oligonucleotides. The discussion also covers groundbreaking advanced therapies, such as gene replacement and gene editing, using examples from spinal muscular atrophy and sickle cell disease. Critical analysis is provided on the challenges of therapeutic resistance, variants of uncertain significance (VUS), and issues of health equity.

Conclusion: The collective evidence firmly establishes that targeting specific gene mutations is a powerful and transformative therapeutic strategy. However, realizing the full potential of precision medicine requires overcoming significant hurdles, including resistance mechanisms, the high cost of therapies, and a lack of diversity in genetic research. Future efforts must focus on innovative trial designs, long-term safety monitoring, and equitable implementation to ensure these advances benefit all patient populations.

Keywords: Gene Mutations, Targeted Therapy, Precision Medicine, Disease Susceptibility, Therapeutic Resistance, Narrative Review.

INTRODUCTION

The completion of the Human Genome Project marked a pivotal moment in biomedical science, heralding an era where the intricate blueprint of human biology could be systematically decoded. This monumental achievement catalyzed a paradigm shift in our understanding of disease etiology, moving from a primarily physiological perspective to one deeply rooted in molecular genetics. It is now unequivocally established that the genetic constitution of an individual, particularly the occurrence of mutations within specific genes, serves as a fundamental determinant of health and disease. Gene mutations, which can range from single nucleotide substitutions to large-scale chromosomal rearrangements, can disrupt vital cellular processes such as DNA repair, cell cycle regulation, and signal transduction. These disruptions can predispose individuals to a vast spectrum of disorders, including cancer, neurodegenerative conditions, cardiovascular diseases, and rare monogenic syndromes, thereby constituting a primary axis around which much of modern pathology revolves (1). The global burden of disease with a significant genetic component is staggering; for instance, hereditary cancers account for approximately 5-10% of all cancer cases, while complex multifactorial diseases like Alzheimer's, with its strong polygenic risk components, affect tens of millions worldwide, posing immense challenges to healthcare systems (2, 3). The initial landscape of genetic research was largely dominated by the study of high-penetrance, monogenic disorders such as cystic fibrosis and Huntington's disease, where a mutation in a single gene is both necessary and sufficient to cause the condition. However, the focus has progressively expanded to encompass the far more complex realm of polygenic and multifactorial diseases. In these conditions, such as type 2 diabetes, schizophrenia, and many autoimmune disorders, an individual's susceptibility is shaped by the cumulative effect of numerous common genetic variants, each conferring a small amount of risk, often in concert with environmental and lifestyle factors (4). The advent of large-scale genome-wide association studies (GWAS) has been instrumental in identifying thousands of these susceptibility loci, illuminating previously unknown biological pathways involved in disease pathogenesis. For example, GWAS have highlighted the role of immune modulation in conditions as diverse as Crohn's disease and Parkinson's, suggesting novel mechanistic connections (5).

Despite this progress, a significant gap remains in translating these statistical associations into a causal understanding of how specific mutations functionally contribute to the initiation and progression of disease. Many risk variants reside in non-coding regions of the genome, making it challenging to discern their target genes and regulatory mechanisms, a challenge often referred to as the "missing heritability" problem. Beyond merely influencing susceptibility, gene mutations are now recognized as powerful drivers of disease progression and heterogeneity. In oncology, this concept is particularly well-illustrated, where the clonal evolution of a tumour is fueled by an accumulating repertoire of somatic mutations. Specific driver mutations not only initiate tumorigenesis but also dictate the clinical aggressiveness, metastatic potential, and therapeutic response of the malignancy (6). The identification of mutations in genes like *EGFR* in non-small cell lung cancer or *BRAF V600E* in melanoma has revealed that the molecular profile of a tumour can be more prognostically informative than its histological classification alone. This understanding is rapidly extending to non-oncological domains. In neurodegenerative diseases like amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), mutations in genes such as *C9orf72* or *SOD1* are associated with distinct rates of progression and clinical phenotypes, enabling more refined prognostic stratification (7). A critical research gap, however, persists in elucidating the precise mechanisms by which a given mutation, often in the context of a unique genetic background, modulates the tempo of disease advancement. Understanding these dynamics is essential for predicting individual patient trajectories and identifying optimal windows for therapeutic intervention. The most transformative impact of elucidating gene mutations has been the birth and proliferation of targeted therapies and precision medicine. The principle is elegantly simple: if a disease is propelled by a specific molecular aberration, then a therapeutic agent designed to selectively inhibit that aberrant target should confer clinical benefit. This approach has moved from a theoretical ideal to a clinical reality, most prominently in oncology.

Tyrosine kinase inhibitors (TKIs) against *BCR-ABL* in chronic myeloid leukemia and *EGFR* mutants in lung cancer have dramatically improved patient outcomes, turning once-fatal diagnoses into manageable chronic conditions for many (8). Furthermore, the development of poly (ADP-ribose) polymerase (PARP) inhibitors for tumours with *BRCA1/2* mutations exemplifies a sophisticated synthetic lethality strategy, where the therapeutic effect is contingent upon the pre-existing genetic makeup of the cancer cells (9). The scope of targeted therapy is now expanding beyond small molecules to include advanced modalities like gene therapy and gene editing. The recent approval of adeno-associated virus (AAV)-based therapies for spinal muscular atrophy and genetic forms of blindness demonstrates the potential to directly correct or compensate for inherited mutations, offering hope for curative interventions in monogenic diseases (10). Despite these remarkable advances, the field is fraught with challenges that represent significant gaps in the current knowledge landscape. The issue of therapeutic resistance is paramount; cancers, for instance, almost invariably develop resistance to targeted agents through secondary mutations or activation of alternative pathways, necessitating the continuous development of next-generation therapies (11). Moreover, the high cost and complex logistics of genetic testing and targeted treatments create disparities in access, limiting the equitable implementation of precision medicine globally. Another unresolved question is the clinical management of variants of uncertain significance (VUS), genetic alterations for which the pathogenicity is unknown. The increasing use of multigene panels and whole-exome sequencing has led to an explosion in the detection of VUS, creating diagnostic uncertainty and anxiety for patients and clinicians alike (12).

Furthermore, the ethical implications of genetic information, including concerns about privacy, psychological impact, and potential discrimination, require ongoing careful consideration and robust regulatory frameworks. Therefore, the objective of this narrative review is to synthesize and critically explore the contemporary understanding of how specific gene mutations influence disease susceptibility and progression, and how this knowledge is fundamentally reshaping targeted therapeutic strategies. This review will delve into the molecular mechanisms by which key driver mutations disrupt cellular homeostasis across a spectrum of human diseases, including but not limited to cancer, neurodegenerative disorders, and cardiovascular conditions. It will specifically examine the journey from mutation discovery to therapeutic application, covering the rationale behind targeted drugs, the phenomenon of treatment resistance, and the emerging promise of gene-editing technologies like CRISPR-Cas9. The scope of this review is primarily focused on literature from the last five years to ensure the inclusion of the most recent advancements, with a emphasis on human studies and clinical trials that highlight translational impact. By providing a synthesized overview of this rapidly evolving field, this review aims to underscore the integral role of genetics in modern pathology, highlight the synergistic connection between molecular discovery and therapeutic innovation, and identify persistent challenges that must be addressed to fully realize the promise of precision medicine for all patients.

THEMATIC DISCUSSION

Oncogenic Mutations as Paradigms for Targeted Therapy

The field of oncology provides the most mature and compelling evidence for the role of gene mutations in disease pathogenesis and the subsequent development of targeted interventions. The paradigm of "oncogenic addiction," wherein cancer cells become reliant on a specific mutated gene for their survival and proliferation, has been a cornerstone of precision medicine. A seminal example is the case of chronic myeloid leukemia (CML), driven almost universally by the BCR-ABL fusion gene, a product of the Philadelphia chromosome. The development of imatinib, a tyrosine kinase inhibitor (TKI) targeting the BCR-ABL protein, revolutionized CML treatment, transforming it from a fatal disease into a manageable chronic condition for most patients (13). This success story established a blueprint that has been aggressively pursued across other malignancies. In non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC), the identification of sensitizing mutations in the epidermal growth factor receptor (EGFR) gene, such as exon 19 deletions and the L858R point mutation, predicted a robust response to EGFR TKIs like gefitinib, erlotinib, and the more recent third-generation inhibitor osimertinib (14). The clinical trajectory of these therapies underscores a critical progression: initial high efficacy, followed by the almost inevitable emergence of resistance, which in turn drives the development of next-generation agents. Osimertinib, for instance, was specifically designed to target the T790M resistance mutation that arose against first-generation TKIs, demonstrating how therapeutic innovation is directly fueled by a deepening understanding of mutational evolution (15).

The landscape of targeted therapy has expanded beyond kinase inhibitors to embrace novel mechanisms such as synthetic lethality. This concept is powerfully illustrated by the use of poly (ADP-ribose) polymerase (PARP) inhibitors in cancers harboring mutations in the BRCA1 or BRCA2 genes. These genes are critical for the homologous recombination (HR) pathway of DNA double-strand break repair. PARP enzymes are involved in a separate DNA repair pathway, base excision repair. When a PARP inhibitor blocks its pathway in a BRCA-deficient tumour cell, which already has a compromised HR pathway, the cumulative DNA damage becomes irreparable, leading to cell death (9). Clinical trials have led to the approval of PARP inhibitors like olaparib and rucaparib for BRCA-mutated ovarian, breast, pancreatic, and prostate cancers, validating this sophisticated biological principle as a potent therapeutic strategy (16). However, the clinical application has also revealed complexities, including mechanisms of resistance such as the restoration of HR proficiency through secondary mutations in BRCA genes, highlighting the dynamic interplay between therapy and tumour evolution (17).

Germline Mutations and Hereditary Cancer Syndromes

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Beyond somatic mutations acquired in tumour tissue, germline mutations present in every cell confer a heritable predisposition to cancer, offering profound insights into disease susceptibility and risk management. Syndromes such as Lynch syndrome, caused by pathogenic variants in DNA mismatch repair (MMR) genes (MLH1, MSH2, MSH6, PMS2), and Hereditary Breast and Ovarian Cancer (HBOC) syndrome, linked primarily to *BRCA1/2* mutations, are classic examples. The penetrance of these mutations is high, but not complete, and modified by other genetic and environmental factors. The identification of a pathogenic germline mutation has far-reaching clinical implications, triggering enhanced surveillance protocols, risk-reducing surgeries, and informing therapeutic choices. For instance, the high mutational burden and microsatellite instability (MSI-H) status of tumours arising in Lynch syndrome make them particularly susceptible to immune checkpoint inhibitors, which unleash the immune system against neoantigen-rich cancer cells (18). Furthermore, the discovery of these mutations has a cascade effect on family members, enabling predictive genetic testing and personalized risk assessment. This shift from reactive treatment to proactive risk prediction represents one of the most significant public health impacts of cancer genetics.

The Expanding Frontier of Non-Oncological Disorders

The principles gleaned from oncology are increasingly being applied to a diverse array of non-malignant diseases, demonstrating the universal relevance of genetic insights. In cardiology, familial hypercholesterolemia (FH) is caused by mutations in genes such as LDLR, APOB, and PCSK9, leading to severely elevated LDL cholesterol and premature atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease. The development of PCSK9 inhibitors, monoclonal antibodies that reduce LDL cholesterol by blocking the PCSK9-mediated degradation of LDL receptors, is a direct translation of genetic discovery into a life-saving therapy (19). Similarly, in neurology, the understanding of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) has been profoundly shaped by the discovery of mutations in genes like C9orf72, SOD1, and TARDBP. These findings have not only revealed pathways involving RNA processing, protein aggregation, and neuronal excitotoxicity but are also paving the way for gene-specific therapies. Antisense oligonucleotide (ASO) therapies designed to target mutant SOD1 or the expanded C9orf72 repeat are currently in clinical trials, offering a glimpse of a future where the progression of this devastating disease can be halted (20).

The realm of rare genetic diseases has witnessed some of the most dramatic therapeutic advances through gene-targeted approaches. Spinal muscular atrophy (SMA), once the leading genetic cause of infant mortality, is caused by homozygous loss of the SMN1 gene. Two groundbreaking therapies have been developed: nusinersen, an ASO that modulates the splicing of the paralogous SMN2 gene to increase production of functional SMN protein, and onasemnogene abeparvovec, an AAV9-based gene therapy that delivers a functional copy of the SMN1 gene directly to motor neurons (21). These interventions have fundamentally altered the natural history of SMA, enabling milestone development and dramatically improved survival. Furthermore, gene editing technologies, particularly CRISPR-Cas9, are moving from bench to bedside. The recent conditional approval of the first CRISPR-based therapy for sickle cell disease and beta-thalassemia, which involves ex vivo editing of the BCL11A gene in hematopoietic stem cells to reactivate fetal hemoglobin, marks a historic milestone in the ability to directly correct the genetic underpinnings of disease (22).

Challenges, Controversies, and Future Directions

Despite the remarkable progress, the implementation of mutation-driven therapeutics is fraught with challenges. The issue of therapeutic resistance remains a formidable obstacle, particularly in oncology. Tumours employ a myriad of escape mechanisms, including on-target secondary mutations, activation of bypass signaling pathways, and phenotypic transformation, such as the epithelial-to-mesenchymal transition (23). Overcoming this requires combination therapies and adaptive treatment strategies informed by repeated molecular profiling. Another significant challenge is the clinical management of variants of uncertain significance (VUS). The widespread adoption of multigene panel testing has led to an exponential increase in the discovery of VUS, creating diagnostic uncertainty and complicating clinical decision-making for patients and their families (12). The resolution of VUS requires extensive functional studies and data sharing across international consortiums, a process that is often slow and resource-intensive.

The high cost of targeted therapies and genetic testing also raises critical questions about health equity and global access. The development and production of gene therapies and novel biologics involve complex and expensive processes, often resulting in prices that are prohibitive for many healthcare systems and patients worldwide (24). This creates a risk of exacerbating existing health disparities, where cutting-edge treatments become available only to a privileged few. Furthermore, the ethical landscape is complex. The ability to edit the human germline, while holding the potential to eradicate monogenic diseases, raises profound ethical concerns about heritable genetic modifications, consent of future generations, and the potential for non-therapeutic enhancements (25). The long-term follow-up of patients receiving novel genetic therapies is also crucial, as the full spectrum of potential late effects, especially for in vivo gene editing, is not yet known.

Looking forward, the field is moving towards an even more integrated and dynamic model of precision medicine. The integration of multi-omics data—genomics, transcriptomics, proteomics—will provide a more holistic view of disease biology, moving beyond a single mutation to understand the complex network of interactions that drive pathology (26). Liquid biopsies, which analyze circulating tumour DNA (ctDNA) or other biomarkers from blood, are emerging as powerful tools for non-invasive disease monitoring, early detection of resistance, and assessment of minimal residual disease. This technology promises to transform cancer management from a static, tissue-based diagnosis to a dynamic, real-time monitoring system. As these technologies mature and our understanding of the human genome deepens, the goal of delivering the right therapy to the right patient at the right time becomes increasingly attainable, heralding a new era in the diagnosis and treatment of human disease.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS AND LIMITATIONS

While the existing literature eloquently demonstrates the transformative potential of targeting gene mutations across a spectrum of diseases, a critical appraisal reveals significant limitations that temper the interpretation of findings and their translation into universal clinical practice. A pervasive challenge across many studies, particularly those investigating rare genetic variants or novel targeted therapies, is the constraint of small sample sizes. Initial proof-of-concept and early-phase clinical trials are often conducted in highly selected patient populations, which, while necessary to establish initial efficacy and safety, limits the statistical power to detect less common adverse events or to identify meaningful patient subgroups that may derive differential benefit (27). For instance, many trials leading to the accelerated approval of targeted agents in oncology were single-arm studies with response rate as the primary endpoint, lacking the comparative rigor of randomized controlled trials (RCTs) against standard-of-care. This design, while expedient, can overestimate treatment effects and fails to account for confounding factors that are balanced through randomization (28). Furthermore, the follow-up duration in many studies of novel genetic therapies remains insufficient to capture long-term consequences. This is particularly pertinent for gene-editing and gene-replacement strategies, where the theoretical risks of oncogenic transformation due to insertional mutagenesis or off-target editing events may not manifest for many years, a concern that cannot be adequately addressed by studies with a two- to five-year follow-up window (29). Methodological biases further complicate the interpretation of the genetic literature. Selection bias is a fundamental concern, as participants in clinical trials for targeted therapies are often younger, have better performance status, and possess fewer comorbidities than the general patient population encountered in routine clinical practice. This creates an "efficacy-effectiveness gap," where the impressive outcomes observed in the controlled environment of a trial are not fully replicated in real-world settings (30). Performance and detection bias are also prevalent, especially in trials where blinding is challenging or impossible due to the distinct toxicity profiles of novel agents compared to standard chemotherapy. The enthusiasm surrounding a new therapeutic paradigm can unconsciously influence both investigator assessments of outcome and patient-reported outcomes. Moreover, a significant confounding factor in many studies of hereditary cancer syndromes is the variable penetrance and expressivity of pathogenic mutations.

Studies often aggregate carriers of a specific gene mutation, yet their individual cancer risks are modified by polygenic risk scores, lifestyle factors, and other genetic modifiers that are rarely fully accounted for in the analysis, potentially leading to over- or underestimation of the effect size attributable to the primary mutation (31). The field is also susceptible to publication bias, where studies with positive or statistically significant results are more likely to be published than those with negative or inconclusive findings. This creates a distorted view of the true clinical utility of a genetic test or targeted therapy. For example, numerous early-phase trials of molecularly targeted agents that failed to show clinical benefit may remain unpublished, leading other research groups to pursue similar, ultimately futile, avenues. This "file drawer problem" wastes precious scientific resources and can expose patients to interventions with limited potential for success (32). The situation is exacerbated in the realm of genomic association studies, where the pressure to report novel loci can lead to an over-interpretation of marginally significant findings that fail to replicate in larger, independent cohorts. Variability in measurement outcomes presents another substantial hurdle for synthesizing evidence across studies. In oncology, while overall survival (OS) remains the gold standard endpoint, many targeted therapy trials now rely on progression-free survival (PFS) or objective response rate (ORR) as primary endpoints. These surrogate endpoints, though enabling faster trial readouts, do not always correlate perfectly with OS and can be subject to assessment bias, particularly in open-label studies (33). In non-oncological fields, the problem is even more pronounced. For neurodegenerative diseases like ALS, a variety of functional rating scales are used, and while some are validated, differences in their sensitivity and what they measure can make cross-trial comparisons challenging. Similarly, in gene therapy trials for rare diseases, the definition of "clinical success" can vary, ranging from biomarker correction to improvement on disease-specific functional scales, making it difficult to compare the magnitude of benefit across different therapeutic platforms.

Finally, the generalizability of findings from the current genetic literature is a critical limitation. The vast majority of large-scale genomic studies, including GWAS and clinical trials for targeted therapies, have been conducted in populations of European ancestry. This creates a profound health disparity, as polygenic risk scores and the predictive power of specific mutations derived from these cohorts often perform poorly when applied to individuals of African, Asian, or Hispanic descent (34). The underlying genetic architecture of disease, including the prevalence and effect sizes of risk variants, can differ substantially across ancestral groups. Consequently, the benefits of precision medicine are not equally distributed, and diagnostic panels and therapeutic algorithms developed from unrepresentative data may be less effective or even misleading for a significant portion of the global population. This lack of diversity in genetic research not only perpetuates health inequities but also means that the full spectrum of disease-related genetic variation remains incompletely characterized, to the detriment of all.

IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The synthesis of the current literature carries profound implications for the immediate and future landscape of clinical practice. The most direct impact is the solidification of comprehensive genomic profiling as a standard of care in many clinical scenarios, particularly in oncology and the diagnosis of rare diseases. For clinicians, this necessitates a shift towards a more proactive diagnostic mindset, where ordering a genetic test becomes an integral part of the initial workup for a patient with a strong family history of cancer or a child with a suspected neurodevelopmental disorder. The findings underscore that treatment decisions must increasingly be guided by molecular characteristics in conjunction with traditional histopathological and clinical staging. This is evident in the management of NSCLC, where testing for EGFR, ALK, ROS1, and other biomarkers is mandatory before initiating first-line therapy. Furthermore, the successful application of therapies like PARP inhibitors and PCSK9 inhibitors demonstrates that effective treatment can be rationally designed based on an understanding of the underlying pathogenic mutation, moving beyond symptomatic management to target the root cause of disease. For patients, this translates into more personalized, effective, and often less toxic treatment options, fundamentally improving quality of life and survival outcomes. At a systemic level, these advancements compel a reevaluation of existing healthcare policies and guidelines. The rapid pace of discovery creates an urgent need for dynamic, frequently updated clinical practice guidelines from professional societies to help clinicians navigate the complex and evolving options for genetic testing and targeted therapy. Payer policies, including those of government agencies and private insurers, must adapt to ensure timely and equitable coverage for these often costly interventions. The high upfront cost of novel therapies, particularly one-time treatments like gene therapies, challenges conventional cost-effectiveness models and necessitates the development of innovative payment structures, such as outcome-based agreements and installment plans, to ensure sustainable patient access (24). Moreover, the ethical and legal frameworks surrounding genetic information require continuous refinement. Policies must robustly protect patients from genetic discrimination, a concern addressed in many countries by legislation like the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA) in the United States, but which requires global reinforcement. Data sharing policies that facilitate the aggregation of genomic and clinical data in large, secure databases are also critical for accelerating discovery while safeguarding patient privacy.

Despite the considerable progress, this review has identified several critical unanswered questions and research gaps that must be prioritized. A primary gap lies in the pervasive issue of therapeutic resistance. Future research must delve deeper into the molecular mechanisms that allow cancers and other diseases to evade targeted agents, with a particular focus on understanding and targeting tumor heterogeneity and the dynamics of clonal evolution. The challenge of Variants of Uncertain Significance (VUS) also represents a major bottleneck; a concerted international effort is required to fund and conduct the functional studies needed to reclassify these variants, a resource-intensive but essential endeavor for precise clinical interpretation (35). Another glaring gap is the lack of genetic diversity in research cohorts. Future studies must intentionally prioritize the inclusion of underrepresented populations to ensure that the benefits of precision medicine are equitable and that polygenic risk scores and therapeutic responses are validated across all ancestral backgrounds. Finally, the long-term safety profile of emerging modalities like in vivo gene editing remains largely unknown, necessitating the establishment of robust, long-term registries to monitor patients for delayed adverse events. To address these gaps, future research must employ more rigorous and innovative study designs. Prospective, randomized controlled trials (RCTs) remain the gold standard for confirming the efficacy and safety of new targeted therapies compared to the current standard of care, especially following accelerated approvals based on single-arm studies. For rare diseases, where large RCTs are often not feasible, innovative designs such as n-of-1 trials, Bayesian adaptive trials, and the use of historical controls can provide robust evidence (36). There is a growing need for more

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"basket" and "umbrella" trials in oncology, which test the hypothesis that molecular alterations, rather than tumor histology, are the primary determinants of therapeutic response. To combat publication bias, the mandatory prospective registration of all clinical trials and the sharing of summary results in public databases should be enforced by journals and funding agencies. Furthermore, future research should increasingly focus on combination therapies from the outset, rationally designed to preempt or overcome resistance mechanisms, and should integrate longitudinal biomarker monitoring (e.g., via liquid biopsy) to understand the dynamic response and evolution of disease under selective therapeutic pressure (37). By embracing these sophisticated methodologies, the next decade of research can move beyond incremental advances and deliver on the full promise of a truly personalized and curative medical paradigm.

CONCLUSION

This narrative review has synthesized a compelling body of evidence demonstrating that gene mutations are fundamental drivers of disease susceptibility and progression across a vast clinical spectrum, from common cancers to rare monogenic disorders. The translation of this molecular understanding into targeted therapeutic strategies, including small molecule inhibitors, gene therapies, and gene editing, represents a paradigm shift in medicine, moving treatment from a one-size-fits-all model towards a more precise and effective personalized approach. The strength of the evidence is robust in establishing the principle of targeted intervention, with undeniable clinical successes in areas like oncology and spinal muscular atrophy providing powerful validation. However, the existing literature is concurrently marked by significant limitations, including small sample sizes in early-phase trials, a lack of long-term safety data for novel modalities, and a critical failure to ensure diverse and representative research populations, which collectively temper the generalizability of some findings and highlight ongoing disparities. Consequently, it is recommended that clinicians integrate comprehensive genomic profiling into standard diagnostic workflows where indicated, while remaining cognizant of the challenges posed by variants of uncertain significance and the inevitability of treatment resistance, which necessitate ongoing patient monitoring and a multidisciplinary care approach. A concerted call for further research is imperative to overcome these hurdles, specifically demanding larger, more diverse longitudinal studies, robust functional analyses to resolve VUS, and innovative trial designs focused on combination therapies and resistance mechanisms, all of which are essential to fully realize the transformative potential of genetics for all patient populations.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

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Muhammad Yasir Yasin	Substantial Contribution to study design, acquisition and interpretation of Data Critical Review and Manuscript Writing Has given Final Approval of the version to be published
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Atif Maqsood	Contributed to Data Collection and Analysis Has given Final Approval of the version to be published
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