

Population Health NEWS

Thought Leaders' Corner

Each month, *Population Health News* asks a panel of industry experts to discuss a topic suggested by a subscriber. Responses to this Thought Leader question are a continuation from the September issue of *Population Health News*.

Q. Do Population Health and Precision Medicine Contradict Each Other?

Precision medicine and population health are not contradictory. Both are rooted in the belief that every patient is unique, and individualized care will best meet their needs. Population health and precision medicine work together, complementing one another in the continuum of care.

Population health refers to the overview, interventions and outcomes of a group; it addresses patient health needs through engagement and targeted interventions. Precision medicine is an approach to disease prevention and treatment that takes into account variability in environment, lifestyle and genetic makeup, recommending interventions customized to an individual patient. Both are focused on delivering the best intervention to improve individual health.

For example, when treating a patient with breast cancer, precision medicine focuses on the right treatment and medication for an individual, based on metrics such as her metabolic rate and the presence or absence of certain genes. Molecular testing is routinely employed because specific information about a person's genetic makeup, or the genetic profile of an individual's tumor, enables physicians to select treatments that will reduce exposure to adverse effects and improve the likelihood of survival. Population health may use models and algorithms to narrow cohorts of individuals down to specific categories for intervention, but the interventions are tailored and personalized to that individual, depending on their lifestyle, engagement mode preferences and specific goals for their health.



Amy O'Brien
Vice President
Product Management
Health Dialog
Boston, Mass.