

Acceptance Speech by Professor
Henri Gerrit Brunner
2016 Co-Winner of the King Faisal International Prize
For Medicine

38th KFIP Awards Ceremony
Wednesday 23/03/2016(14/06/1437H.)

Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques
King Salman Bin Abdulaziz,
Your Highnesses,
Your Eminences,
Your Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests.

I thank the King Faisal foundation for awarding us the 2016 International Prize for Medicine. I thank the great team at Radboud UMC Nijmegen that worked together for many years to promote Next Generation Sequencing from a research tool to a powerful medical diagnostic test. NGS is now the primary diagnostic test that is applied to patients with rare and complex clinical diseases. In only 5 years, NGS has secured its place in clinical medicine. This is remarkable.

Recognizing rare diseases allows patients to understand where their disease came from, and what it is. This knowledge enables patients to find other families and individuals who have the same condition. It empowers them to seek advice that is relevant to their future, to family planning, and sometimes of therapeutic benefit. It helps doctors to provide the appropriate treatments and care.

Genomics is among the sciences shared among all the nations. We share the same diseases, even when their frequencies differ from one place to another. Having good genes does not protect our children from having new and sometimes severe genetic disease. This is a lesson in humility for those who take pride in the excellence of their genes.

For these reasons it is important to share knowledge. The patients are everywhere and the knowledge on rare diseases is often scarce and dispersed. This has been one of the great joys of the work that Joris Veltman and I have been fortunate to do. To work with an integrated

team of men and women, young and old, from 27 different countries around the world. To accept each member as an equal and integral part of the adventure. Today I realize even more, how much we are all citizens of a single world.

Thank you