

BioSpect

the business of Bio

24 years of leveraging the business of Bio
www.biospectrumindia.com

“Most general practitioners have not been trained in genomics and are not yet comfortable interpreting or acting on genetic risk reports”

22 April 2026 | Views

While most health checkups provide a snapshot of an individual's current health, genomic testing enables a deeper understanding of lifelong predispositions. With increasing awareness around how genetics influence health risks, there is a growing shift towards incorporating genomic screening into routine preventive healthcare. This approach allows individuals to better understand risks related to conditions such as cancers, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, neurological disorders, and rare genetic conditions, thereby enabling more informed lifestyle and healthcare decisions. Orange Health Labs, India's fastest on-demand diagnostic lab service, has introduced genomic (DNA-based) testing as part of its efforts to democratise precision medicine through accessible and clinically relevant diagnostics. In an interaction with BioSpectrum Tarun Bhambra, Co-founder of Orange Health Labs explains about these new services and challenges.



What made you decide to enter genomic (DNA-based) testing now?

Current approach to health checkups is a cookie-cutter approach - same combination of tests being done for everyone, even though every individual is unique.

The reality is that each one of us carries a unique code inside, and with it, some unique risks that need special attention.

We believe the future is to fashion your annual health checkups with insights from your genomics. First identify your proclivity to metabolic and chronic conditions and then you can effectively track what your body is at risk for.

You can track whether you are susceptible for cholesterol, have poor absorption for certain kinds of minerals and vitamins and have high risk for specific cardiac conditions or cancer. You need to do this test only once in your life.

Once done - you should track your health in annual health checkups accordingly. That's Diagnostics 2.0 - personalised for you. Genetics will be a key part of this future.

Is Orange Health a diagnostics company or a genomics/precision medicine company going forward?

Entering into Genomics is part of our larger vision to measure human health. Preventive healthcare, as we see it, has three layers: a one-time genetic blueprint, regular health checkups, and diagnostic tests when something is flagged. Our platform now brings all three together. Genomics strengthens our core diagnostics offering—it doesn't replace it.

What is the main customer reason for taking a DNA test today The primary driver is family history—people want to understand whether conditions like cancer, heart disease, or diabetes could affect them.

The second is proactive health planning—health-conscious individuals adding a long-term risk layer to their annual checkups. We hope to create a higher focus on this which will allow diagnostics to become a more personalised solution for every citizen.

We're also seeing interest from: Couples planning a family (carrier screening) and Patients on long-term medication (drug response insights)

How do you ensure accuracy and clinical trust in at-home genomic testing?

We've built world-class capabilities in at-home sample collection, with the fastest sample transfer systems to our labs under temperature-controlled conditions. This means our samples arrive in the best possible condition to be tested in labs.

Whether it's collected at home or at one of our physical centres, the focus is the same: a seamless, hygienic experience, rapid transport, and strict control over sample quality at every step.

That's what ensures clinical reliability you can trust.

What is different about your genomic tests compared to other labs already offering them in India?

There are three clear differences.

First, accessibility—we bring genomic testing home, instead of requiring visits to specialised labs.

Second, preventive focus —Usually genetic testing is focussed only on proclivity for metabolic diseases and cancers. While we offer that too, we are offering a wellness solution in genetic testing called NutriDNA. This test helps you identify not what terminal conditions you will get, but instead what your genes say you need to do to live a healthier life. This is far more valuable insight.

Third, and most importantly, counselling. Every test includes a one-on-one session with a genetic counsellor. A report without interpretation has limited value—counselling makes it actionable.

And because we're a diagnostics platform, any follow-up testing can happen seamlessly within the same ecosystem

How do you handle the shortage of genetic counselors at scale?

India has a limited pool of trained genetic counsellors. We ensure that every customer receives a one-on-one counselling session within two business days of their report.

As adoption grows, scaling counselling capacity will be a focus area.

Do doctors fully trust at-home genomic testing results?

At Orange Health Labs, one of our 4 core values is #DoctorsFirst. This is in recognition of the fact that while patients pay for the reports, the ultimate users of our reports are Doctors.

This is why we have a large on ground team to work closely with Doctors across India. We invest heavily in explaining our technology and latest tests we bring to the market. To further bridge this gap from the consumer side: Every report is backed by genetic counselling and Customers are guided on how to discuss results with their doctor

As awareness improves, genomic insights will increasingly become part of routine clinical decision-making.

How do you prevent genetic testing from being misused or misunderstood by customers?

We address this by making genetic counselling a mandatory part of the experience. Every customer has a one-on-one session with a trained counsellor who explains the results, what they mean, and—equally important—what they don't mean.

How do you plan to compete if prices for DNA testing fall sharply?

Orange Health Labs is not a discount-led aggregator. We are a full-stack, high-quality diagnostics company with an end-to-end supply chain and own accredited laboratories. Having said that - we recognise the importance of offering value and

ensuring affordability as a focus area without compromising on quality for making healthcare more accessible.

Currently, genetic testing is expensive because of the lower scale of testing in the country. As the volumes rise, we expect genomics to become far cheaper and more affordable.

We are keen to offer value to our customers and we intend to lead the revolution in making personalised diagnostics through genomics a common reality.

As part of this mission, as this technology becomes affordable, we will proactively work on sharing that benefit with our customers.

What is your most important genomic product and why?

We have two key products in genomics that we believe everyone should do once in their lifetime.

First, NutriDNA - this is a test that showcases how good your body is in metabolizing key vitamins and minerals, whether you have risks with regards to metabolic diseases (like cholesterol, thyroid etc) and how your body responds to exercise and different kinds of foods. This test is critical for you to note what nutritional deficiencies you may have despite taking supplements. Most common packages don't include key vitamins / minerals because they are expensive and are not available at discounted rates. With this test - you will know which high end tests you should include once in a while in your annual health check-ups to ensure you have a long and healthy life.

Second, Genomic Health Insights - the most comprehensive single test we offer: it screens for inherited risk across 100+ conditions, including cancers, cardiovascular disease, and metabolic disorders. It includes carrier status for 181 conditions, which is relevant for anyone planning a family. And it covers pharmacogenomics for approximately 110 drugs, which tells you how your body may respond to commonly prescribed medicines. This is critical for you to check what kind of screening tests you need to do regularly for early detection of life-threatening conditions.

Both of these combined serves as a long-term health blueprint.

What is the biggest challenge in scaling genomic testing in India?

The customer does not yet understand what genetic testing is. Many people confuse it with ancestry testing, or assume it is only relevant if there is a known disease in the family.

Clinician awareness is the second challenge. Most general practitioners in India have not been trained in genomics and are not yet comfortable interpreting or acting on genetic risk reports.

Genetic testing is a great way to get a map of your health on which you can track your risk. You can personalise your annual check ups and feel more safe about the risks you face.

Narayan Kulkarni

narayan.kulkarni@mmactiv.com