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Google's Moonshot to map a healthy human body

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Google's Moonshot division has embarked on an ambitious health project, to develop a biochemical finger print of a healthy human body. The goal of the project is to improve the understanding of human physiology and identify any deviations from normal.

The research project led by molecular biologist Dr Andrew Conrad, plans to collect genetic material from 175 people anonymously. Google X's Baseline Study will then help in identifying 'biomarkers' that enable easy and early disease detection.

Dr Andrew Conrad of Google X said, "Google X Life Sciences group is working on a wearable device that Baseline participants will wear to collect data like heart rate."

He added that this research would give them clues about how the human body stays healthy or becomes sick, which could in turn unlock insights into how diseases could be better detected or treated. Studying health may improve our understanding about various diseases, he said.

The pilot project would further be expanded by Duke University and Stanford University to thousands of participants. The pilot study has been reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board (IRB), which is independent from Google.

Google's involvement in the project allows researchers to employ the company's vast computational power for data processing and storage. The firm said that this research was its contribution to science and the resulting data would be made available to qualified health researchers, thus encouraging future projects at Google or at other health and technology companies.