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Nicholas J. Short is the Managing Director and Chief Scientific Officer of Iceland Genomics Corporation, a privately held company working to develop new diagnostic tests, therapeutic targets and drugs for cancer. After completing his Ph.D. at the University of Cambridge, he moved to London, where he continued his work on the control of eukaryotic transcription at King's College. In 1992, he became the Chief Editor for the Biological Sciences at the journal *Nature*, where he and his team published papers on topics ranging from cloned sheep and feathered dinosaurs to new drugs and genetically modified crops. While there, he was also responsible for supplements on genomics, drug discovery and new forms of therapy, in addition to organizing seven conferences and helping to launch four new journals in the *Nature* stable. In 1999, he left to become the founder and Senior Partner of Short & Co., a consulting firm providing scientific advice for the banking, venture capital, biotechnology and pharmaceutical communities, before joining Iceland Genomics in 2000.

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Clinical Genomics and the Icelandic Cancer Project

Populations that have remained substantially isolated since their foundation offer major advantages for genetic studies, as the relatively homogenous genetic background reduces the number of disease alleles in the population and hence increases the relative risk conferred by each allele. One of the best studied such populations is that of Iceland, which was founded in the 9th century. Iceland Genomics Corporation enjoys preferential access to Icelandic cancer patients by virtue of its close relationship with the clinicians treating cancer in the country and its collaborations with the Icelandic Cancer Registry and the National Hospital System. But how can identifying disease-causing alleles be used to maximize benefit to the patient? Iceland Genomics is using a 'clinical genomics' approach to correlate the molecular biology of patient tumors with the mutations that give rise to them, giving the first integrated picture of cancer across an entire nation. The Company is also developing an integrated platform with which to validate promising targets and screen for drug leads directed against them. This 'post-genomics' strategy should produce drugs with increased effectiveness against tumor types that are refractory to current treatment, while at the same time minimizing undesirable side effects.