

Journal Article

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The application of genomics technologies to medicine and biomedical research is increasing in popularity, made possible by new high-throughput genotyping and sequencing technologies and improved data analysis capabilities. Some of the greatest genetic diversity among humans, animals, plants, and microbiota occurs in Africa, yet genomic research outputs from the continent are limited. The Human Heredity and Health in Africa (H3Africa) initiative was established to drive the development of genomic research for human health in Africa, and through recognition of the critical role of bioinformatics in this process, spurred the establishment of H3ABioNet, a pan-African bioinformatics network for H3Africa. The limitations in bioinformatics capacity on the continent have been a major contributory factor to the lack of notable outputs in high-throughput biology research. Although pockets of high-quality bioinformatics teams have existed previously, the majority of research institutions lack experienced faculty who can train and supervise bioinformatics students. H3ABioNet aims to address this dire need, specifically in the area of human genetics and genomics, but knock-on effects are ensuring this extends to other areas of bioinformatics. Here, we describe the emergence of genomics research and the development of bioinformatics in Africa through H3ABioNet.