

Pfizer inks pact to study IBD

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Pharmaceutical giant Pfizer has joined hands with genetics-testing startup 23andMe, to study the genetics of inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), or the chronic inflammation of the digestive tract.

Reportedly, the study is looking to genotype 10,000 volunteers in the United States who have been diagnosed with Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis, the two types of IBDs. While the participants cannot be 23andMe customers, they will submit samples through 23andMe's at-home saliva collection kit and fill out online surveys through the company's website.

The goal is to develop new or improved treatments, the companies said.

"Pfizer is committed to bringing forward new treatments for people suffering with IBD", said Mr Jose Carlos Gutierrez-Ramos, senior vice president and head of biotherapeutics, research and development, Pfizer in a statement. He added, "By enhancing our understanding of the underlying biology of the disease, we hope to better support our clinical research activities and development programs."

23andMe CEO Ms Anne Wojcicki mentioned in a statement, "We are excited about teaming up with Pfizer to take an innovative, consumer-centered approach to try to understand the fundamentals of inflammatory bowel disease and the variability of treatment response."