

After writing yesterday's post on personalized medicine and genomics I was directed (hat tip to Garrett) to a special report on the human genome in the current issue of the *Economist* titled [Biology 2.0](#)

. Below are clips from the first page, but the entire article is well worth reading to understand where we are today in genetic research.

"TEN years ago, on June 26th 2000, a race ended. The result was declared a dead heat and both runners won the prize of shaking the hand of America's then president, Bill Clinton, at the White House. The runners were J. Craig Venter for the private sector and Francis Collins for the public. The race was to sequence the human genome, all 3 billion genetic letters of it, and thus—as headline writers put it—read the book of life.

...And then it all went terribly quiet. The drugs did not appear. Nor did personalised medicine. Neither did the genetic underclass. And the money certainly did not materialise. Biotech firms proved to be just as good at consuming cash as dotcom start-ups, and with as little return. The casual observer, then, might be forgiven for thinking the whole thing a damp squib, and the \$3 billion spent on the project to be so much wasted money. But the casual observer would be wrong. **As *The Economist* observed at the time, the race Dr Venter and Dr Collins had been engaged in was a race not to the finish but to the starting line.** "

The current articles on the human genome highlight the importance of the [recent court decision](#) on gene patents. Genetic research is just getting started in leveraging the knowledge of the Human Genome Project. It is our job as a foundation to ensure that NF research is front and center in exploring these new methods and technologies.

John

