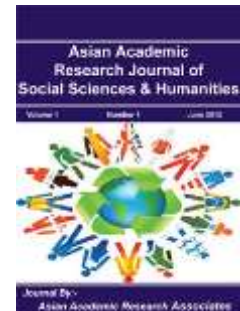




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**DISEASE GENE PATENTS, BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH AND PUBLIC
HEALTH: A REVIEW ON POLITICAL, LEGAL AND ETHICAL
CHALLENGES**

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ABSTRACT

Since the first ever patent on a genetically modified organism was granted in 1980 in the US, hundreds of attempts on patenting life forms including human disease genes have been made and many have been patented by individual researchers, companies and government agencies. Different regulations have been implemented for proper monitoring of patents on life and genes in different countries. Despite all the regulations, limitations have been seen in the process of patenting living organisms and genes. Attempt to exploit people and block competitor's research, through intellectual property rights have been observed, several of which are discussed in this review with special reference to impacts of disease gene patents on healthcare equity in developing countries. At the same time, moral dilemmas arising from patenting are also discussed. Finally some possible reforms on the patent system in ways that would discourage exploitation and still encourage innovations are discussed.

Key Words: *disease gene patents, health care equity, genomics research*
