**Japan to discuss steps to prevent genetic discrimination**

Kyodo

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The government will discuss measures to prevent discrimination based on genetic information after a health ministry survey revealed Friday that people are being treated unfairly in recruitment and insurance contracts.

In the Health, Labor and Welfare Ministry’s online survey of some 11,000 people between 20 and 70, about 350 people, or 3.2 percent, said they had received discriminatory treatment based on their genetic information or family disease history.

Japan has no regulations prohibiting such discrimination despite the growing use of genetic testing for predicting people’s vulnerability to disease and potential reaction to medicines.

The survey also revealed that more than 30 percent of the respondents did not know what genomic medicine entails.

“First, it is necessary to promote public understanding about genetic information and share the internationally accepted principle of not allowing discrimination based on genetic traits,” said Kaori Muto, a University of Tokyo professor who led the survey.

Responding to a multiple-answer question in the survey, about 300 of the people who said they had been discriminated against based on their genetics said that insurers had refused to sell them policies or set higher premiums.

There also were cases where people were demoted at work or forced into an unwanted divorce because of their genetic makeup.

Some countries prohibit rules or agreements that require people to take genetic tests and report the results as a condition for insurance or employment.

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2017/06/16/national/japan-discuss-steps-prevent-genetic-discrimination/>