To the Editor:

Mutations causing inherited disease and cancer affect individuals and families. The existence of such mutations is poorly documented because they do not rate highly in the priority of journal editors. However they do rate highly for clinical geneticists, counselors, diagnosticians, and others attempting to deliver the best genetic health care. Because these individuals rely on databases of mutations to assist them in delivery of their care, it is a corollary that their submission of mutations to a public system would lead to better health care. This leads to two suggestions for consideration.

(1) Instances of mutations in individuals causing inherited disease should be transmitted to a body responsible for receiving compulsory reports of infectious disease and cancer, for example, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the United States.

(2) Diagnostic laboratories dealing with inherited disease, as part of their quality control or licensing conditions, should report instances of mutation causing each inherited disease.

These suggestions have been received by individuals in the relevant professions without strong objection, presumably because they stand to gain from a full set of mutations that have been discovered.

A possible aid to their potential reporting, a public mutation portal, the WayStation, is currently undergoing beta-testing (www.centralmutations.org). Public opinions on the above proposals would be welcomed.

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