

# Race and Federal Research Categories

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- Thesis:
  - The FDA should stop requiring the collection of race data, because collecting this data has some risks and almost no benefits.

- I. Federal race reporting requirements have few benefits
  - A. Self reported race as a proxy for genetic differences
    1. Self-reported race as a proxy for geographical ancestry
    2. Geographical ancestry as a proxy for genetic differences
      - a. Real and superficial kinds
      - b. Race: real or superficial kind?
      - c. The link between disease and race
  - B. The clinical usefulness of racial genetic differences
- II. The risks of federal race reporting requirements
- III. Evaluating federal race reporting requirements

I. Federal race reporting requirements have few benefits

# Quiz 1

- What is your race?
- How, specifically, do you know that is what your race is?
- Write as many things as you can think of, in order of importance

# Races, according to the US Census Bureau

1. White – A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.
2. Black or African American – A person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa.
3. American Indian or Alaska Native – A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America) and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment.
4. Asian – A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.
5. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander – A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.

# Superficial and Real Kinds

- John Stuart Mill, *A System of Logic: Ratiocinative and Inductive* (1843)
  - Nature makes divisions between kinds
  - People recognize those divisions and give names to different kinds
  - Some kinds have far more in common than others

# Superficial Kinds

- A **superficial kind** is a group that has little in common except the characteristic by which we distinguish the kind (or things that directly follow from this characteristic).
- Examples:
  - Blue things
  - People with last names beginning with letters A-M
  - vegetables

# Real Kinds

- Real (or natural) kinds: have many things in common, which do not simply follow from the characteristics by which we distinguish the kind
- Examples:
  - Dogs
  - Children
  - Fruit

# Quiz 2

- Which of the following represent real kinds, and which are superficial kinds?
  - Chickens
  - things bought on Amazon
  - people who have been to China
  - rap music
  - heavy metal music
  - android phones

# Question:

- Is race a **superficial** or **real** kind?

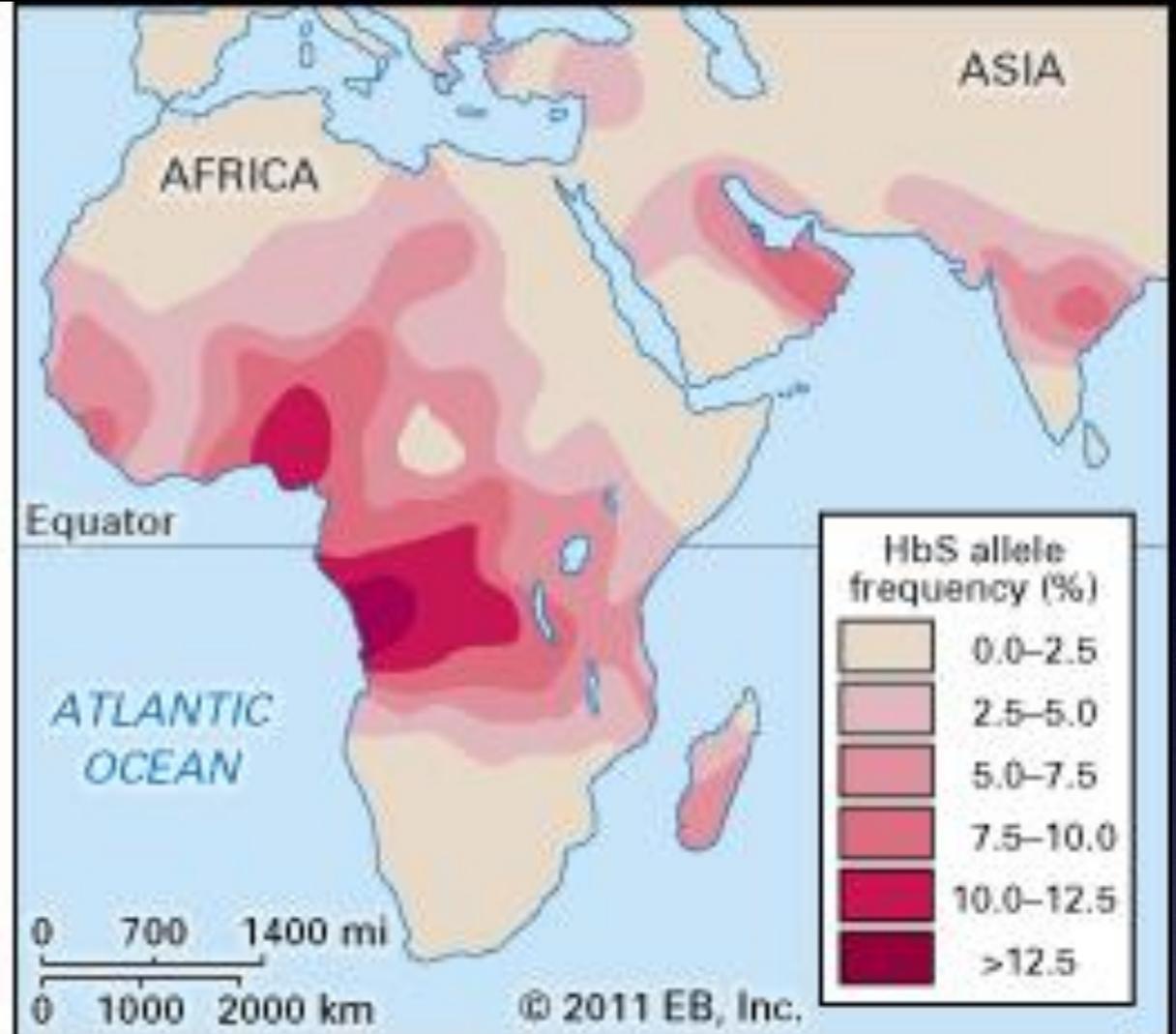
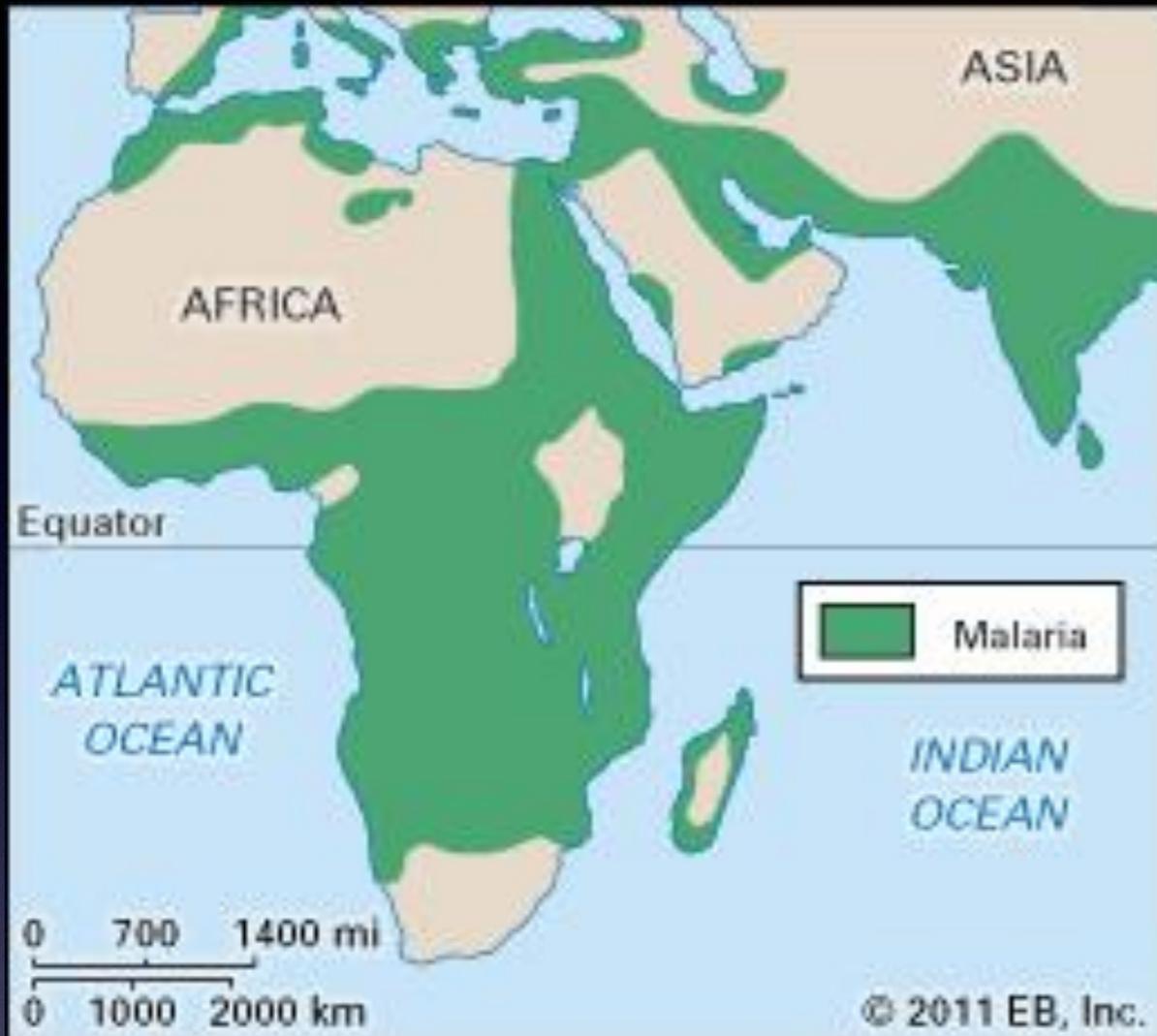
# Race is somewhere in the middle...

- Races are categories ultimately determined by geographical ancestry (according to US Census)
- Groups sharing geographical ancestry typically also share certain physical characteristics
  - appearance: for example, “black” or “white” skin color
  - These physical characteristics “**do not simply follow from the characteristics by which we distinguish the kind**”
  - So race is at least a partially real biological category
- However, possession of associated characteristics like skin color is **not uniform** among members of the different groups
  - So racial groups are also partially artificial

Geographical ancestry is also associated with variations in genetic susceptibility to disease

1. Black people more susceptible to sickle cell anemia

2. White people more susceptible to MS



# Malaria vs. Sickle Cell Trait Frequency

Genetic variation that is statistically associated with race is rarely clinically useful.

- Poor metabolizers of drugs using the enzyme CYP2D6 (Lillquist, E., & Sullivan, C. A. (2006)).
  - Asians: 1%
  - Whites: 10%
  - African Americans: 19%
- This might suggest more caution in using these drugs with African American patients than others, but in fact you have to be careful with all of them!

# II. The risks of federal race reporting requirements

- Reifies concept of biological race
- May reinforce social hierarchies historically premised on the concept of biological race
- Clinical misuse?

# III. Evaluating federal race reporting requirements

- Collecting race data is of little benefit
- Also poses potential risks
- What do you think: do the benefits outweigh the risks?