

Genetic tests advertised directly to the consumer

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Genetic testing services have recently begun to be advertised directly to the patient, and the results of the consumers' response can affect public health, as well as the future adoption of pharmacogenetic/genomic testing, according to a position paper from the American College of Clinical Pharmacology (ACCP) to be published in the August 2009 issue of the *Journal of Clinical Pharmacology*. The journal is published on behalf of the ACCP by SAGE.

According to the article, "Direct-to-Consumer/Patient Advertising of [Genetic Testing](#): A Position Statement of the American College of Clinical Pharmacology," prescription medications have been advertised in the US for 10+ years with a defined oversight of the process, however, there's no comparable supervision for advertised genetic testing. In order for the consumer to have a positive experience with choosing genetic testing from advertising, clinical pharmacologists believe that effective governmental oversight is imperative, along with assistance from professional clinicians.

Clinical pharmacologists should also help prepare consumers for possible risks of the tests and work closely with those who are considering taking further action in response to an advertisement of genetic testing, providing the following cautionary advice:

- Verify with a professional, the information presented in advertisements of genetic testing
- Seek advice from a genetic clinician, not just a general health care professional
- Recognize the scientific limitations of each test, especially since the information isn't necessarily translatable when it's time to make therapeutic decisions.

- Realize that many companies selling genetic testing services do not provide interpretation of results.

Commenting on the expanding frontiers of health professions, the authors conclude, "Clinical pharmacology will have a voice in how the evolving science translates not only into clinical trials and patient care but also into regulations involving the promotion and advertising of all genetic tests. Clinical pharmacologists can help ensure that realistic expectations of genetic tests are communicated, thereby mitigating psychological, social, and medical risks."

More information: "Direct-to-Consumer/Patient Advertising of Genetic Testing: A Position Statement of the American College of Clinical Pharmacology" by Barbara Ameer, PharmD, MBA, of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, and Norberto Krivoy, MD, of the Center for Translational Genetics, B. Rappaport Institute for Research in Medical Sciences, and Clinical Pharmacology Institute, Rambam Health Care Campus and Technion—Israel Institute of Technology, is being made available free of charge for a limited time at jcp.sagepub.com/cgi/content/full/49/8/886 .

Source: SAGE Publications

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