



Association for Molecular Pathology
Promoting Clinical Practice, Basic Research, and Education in Molecular Pathology
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February 26, 2009

AMP Position Statement: Genetic Ancestry Testing

The Association for Molecular Pathology (AMP) is an international medical professional association representing approximately 1,500 physicians, doctoral scientists, and medical technologists who perform laboratory testing based on knowledge derived from molecular biology, genetics, and genomics. Since the beginning of our organization we have dedicated ourselves to the development and implementation of molecular diagnostic testing, which includes genetic testing in all its definitions, in a manner consistent with the highest standards established by the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Act (CLIA), the College of American Pathologists (CAP), the American College of Medical Genetics (ACMG), and the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Our members lead and work at the majority of clinical molecular diagnostic laboratories in the United States and laboratories in many other countries. We are frequently involved in the development of novel molecular tests, and in the validation of laboratory developed or commercial assays.

In 2007 AMP published its position statement (http://www.amp.org/gov/AMPDTCPositionStatement_Final.pdf) against DTC (Direct To Consumer) genetic testing that makes health related claims and has potential for harm caused by misleading customers and the general public. Another aspect of DTC, namely Genetic Ancestry Testing, is an emerging market that has received the attention of public and professional organizations. ASHG (American Society of Human Genetics) recently developed a series of recommendations aimed at establishing a framework for performing and interpreting results obtained from ancestry testing in a socially and culturally appropriate manner (http://ashg.org/pdf/ASHGANcestryTestingStatement_FINAL.pdf). AMP supports these recommendations. Furthermore, AMP believes that the sensitivity, specificity, and the predictive value of results obtained from ancestry testing in the general population have not been clearly established. The DTC companies offering such testing must be held accountable to educate their targeted consumers on the analytical and interpretive validity, assumptions, limitations, and risks associated with such testing. Lastly, AMP strongly recommends against the use of results obtained from ancestry testing in any aspect of medical decision making.

Statement drafted by the AMP Clinical Practice Committee, Iris Schrijver, MD, Chair

Approved by AMP Council, February 26, 2009
Jan A. Nowak, MD, PhD, President