

Nutrigenomics

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“Highly accurate genetic diagnostic testing (that) can clearly pinpoint health risks which previously would have been lurking out-of-sight” provided by: Sanoviv Medical Institute

As a 2nd article regarding on-line genetic testing and DTC (direct to consumer) genetic testing, I want to touch on the topic of “nutrigenomics” (NG). This is the type of genetic testing that provides “tests for variants in several genes associated with diet-related disease or other health conditions that have multiple causes such as heart disease, diabetes and osteoporosis”. Average NG test costs are about \$440 to \$530 (range \$90 to \$2,200)¹. Accompanying the test results are offered supplements (nutraceuticals) and diet and lifestyle recommendations (all for a fee). In 2006, the U.S. Government Accountability Office investigated the legitimacy of claims made by nutrigenomics companies and found that the information provided was “meaningless and potentially harmful to consumers.”²

Since that report, few of these companies have stopped offering this type of testing and in fact, many have actually expanded services—indicating that people are purchasing the tests and accompanying products. A number of these companies offer a testing profile mix of NG and clinical chemistry tests, such as serum homocysteine for heart health and allergen testing. A few go as far as stating that results from these clinical chemistry tests increase in utility when combined with NG test results.¹ The American Society of Human Genetics has highlighted the importance of provider education regarding the validity of DTC tests, and of interest, and maybe surprising, is that it is naturopathic physicians most often promoting and utilizing the tests, followed by nutritionists, dieticians and MDs (in equal number), and chiropractors¹.

There is no evidence to support the gene-disease associations offered in nutrigenomics tests.³

Again, buyer and physician, beware.....and get informed.....

1. Sterling, Rene. Genetics in Medicine 10:784, '08.
2. www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-06-977T
3. Janssens, A.C., et al. AJHG 82:593, '08.