

Clinically questionable consumer DNA tests challenging for genetic counselors to interpret

Home genetic tests like AncestryDNA and 23andMe are more popular than ever, with sales topping \$99 million in 2017. But having widespread access to personal genetic information—without the knowledge of how to interpret results—can lead to problems.

A new study in [Translational Behavioral Medicine](#) is the first to examine the challenges that can arise when people contact healthcare providers about their “raw” DNA interpretation results.

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A number of experts have since raised concerns about the marketing and clinical validity of DTC testing services, especially given that the US Food and Drug Administration does not regulate third-party genetic interpretation services.

Researchers surveyed 85 genetic counselors; more than half (53 percent) indicated that they had been contacted by patients following their use of third-party raw DNA interpretation services.

Participants reported a number of challenges when dealing with these patients, including their overemphasis on the validity of the DTC testing results and their resistance to the information subsequently provided by the counselors.

Counselors described patients as overconfident in both their existing knowledge and their understandings of what the results meant, which led to challenges when the counselors countered patients' expectations.

“Our results suggest that misunderstanding of genetic information conveyed on various DTC reports is relatively common and has potentially adverse implications both on the receptivity to the information conveyed by genetic counselors and the emotional responses by patients,” the authors write.

Read full, original post: [Home DNA tests put gene experts in an awkward spot](#)