

DNA Direct Replies to “A Case Study of Personalized Medicine,” *Science*, April 2008.

Dear Editor,

In reference to the April 4th, 2008 article A Case Study of Personalized Medicine¹, we would like to correct some inaccuracies regarding DNA Direct and comment on the misrepresentation of the findings of the EGAPP Working Group on CYP450 and SSRIs.

Katsanis, et al. suggests that DNA Direct provides CYP450 testing for SSRIs “direct to consumer, rather than through a medical provider¹.” This is inaccurate. DNA Direct does not offer interpretation of CYP450 testing for SSRIs. DNA Direct is a web-enabled genetic consultation company staffed by board certified genetic counselors, with medical oversight provided by an M.D. medical geneticist. All medical genetic testing is provided according to standard medical guidelines developed under the oversight of our medical director. Secure, web-enabled interpretation and genetic consultation regarding test results is highly personalized to the patient. We advocate for consultation with a local provider if one is available for the patient – not always possible given the shortage of genetics professionals. Our patients may seek consultation directly or a physician may refer a patient for services. Of note, our most common healthcare provider referral is for consultation regarding CYP450 testing for tamoxifen. No patient receives testing through DNA Direct without the involvement of a healthcare provider.

Katsanis, et al. inaccurately represent the recommendations of the EGAPP working group regarding CYP450 testing and SSRIs. They interpret the conclusions of EGAPP to be that no CYP450 testing should be offered by their statement, “despite the EGAPP conclusions, at least 15 businesses currently offer CYP450 genotyping services.¹” EGAPP concluded, however, that “there is insufficient evidence to support a recommendation for or against use of CYP450 testing in adults beginning SSRI treatment².” There are indications for CYP450 testing other than SSRI use³, and some individuals taking specific SSRIs may benefit from the knowledge of their CYP450 results.

Sincerely,

Allan T. Bombard, MD, FACOG, FACMG
Medical Director, DNA Direct

Trisha Brown, MS, CGC
Vice President, Clinical Affairs DNA Direct

DNA Direct
Pier 9 Suite 105
San Francisco, CA 94111
415-646-0222
trish@dnadirect.com

References:

1. Katsanis SH, Javitt G. and Hudson K. A case study of personalized medicine *Science* (2008): 320:53-54
2. Recommendations of the EGAPP working group: testing for cytochrome P450 polymorphisms in adults with nonpsychotic depression with selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors. *Genet Med* (2007) 9:819-825
3. Table of Valid Genomic Biomarkers in the Context of Approved Drug Labels, US Food and Drug Administration, http://www.fda.gov/cder/genomics/genomic_biomarkers_table.htm as accessed on April 3, 2008.

COMPANY STANDARDS AND CONSUMER GUIDELINES

DNA Direct is committed to being a responsible, reliable provider of genetic services. We have developed guidelines to enable our company to help consumers and healthcare providers decide whether genetic testing is appropriate, whether to pursue it, and to help them obtain value from testing. Read more about our standards and guidelines:

<http://www.dnadirect.com/patients/about/standards.jsp>

PROFESSIONAL GUIDELINES

As a leader in consumer genetics, DNA Direct has sought to establish the highest standards for providing clinical and consumer genetics services to individuals and their families. In December 2007, the National Society of Genetic Counselors (NSGC) issued guidelines for “direct-to-consumer” genetic testing companies and services. Read more about these guidelines and how DNA Direct believes we meet and exceed these recommendations:

http://www.dnadirect.com/patients/about/professional_guidelines.jsp