



American College of Neuropsychopharmacology

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ACNP Does Not Advocate the Use of Genetic Testing In Mental Illnesses Issues Statement on the Issue

Nashville, TN, May 6, 2008— The American College of Neuropsychopharmacology (ACNP) Council is concerned that the scientific basis for genetic testing for neuropsychiatric disorders is not advanced enough to warrant its use in any clinical setting to identify patients or propose treatments. Therefore, the College's Executive Committee, speaking on behalf of ACNP Council, issued the following statement.

"The 'Genomics Revolution' has enabled scientists to elucidate the human genome and, subsequently, to identify risk, disease, and treatment-prediction genes. For Mendelian disorders such as Huntington's Disease, such genetic testing is highly sensitive and specific. If you have the "risk" gene, you will develop Huntington's Disease. For biopsy-based breast cancer, treatment decisions can be guided by fairly solid genetic information.

For neuropsychiatric disorders such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorders, the scientific basis for establishing diagnosis or treatment choice is not well established. Research on the genetics of these disorders is a high priority for the field of psychiatry. While the genomics revolution may eventually justify genetic testing in psychiatric patients for clinically meaningful genetic variations, such scientifically supported and responsibly administered testing lies in the future for these patients. For now, the polygenicity and complexity of risk, diagnosis and treatment in psychiatric illness make genetic testing in these realms scientifically unsupportable for general clinical use and certainly inappropriate in the direct-to-consumer arena."

ACNP, founded in 1961, is a professional organization of more than 700 leading scientists, including three Nobel Laureates. The mission of ACNP is to further research and education in neuropsychopharmacology and related fields in the following ways: promoting the interaction of a broad range of scientific disciplines of brain and behavior in order to advance the understanding of prevention and treatment of disease of the nervous system including psychiatric, neurological, behavioral and addictive disorders; encouraging scientists to enter research careers in fields related to these disorders and their treatment; and ensuring the dissemination of relevant scientific advances.