

Overview of the EuroGentest network and OECD guidelines for genetic testing

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The rapid translation of research into diagnostic genetic tests is positive. However, this gives scientists, counselors and doctors a special responsibility to offer services of the highest quality and to make sure that all EU citizens can benefit from the same high standards of genetics care. EuroGentest (EUGT; www.eurogentest.org) Network of Excellence aims to improve standards in genetic services throughout the EU, and beyond. EUGT is an EU-funded project that enters into its fourth year of activities. It involves leading EU experts, who are developing the necessary infrastructure, tools, resources, guidelines and procedures that will structure, harmonize and improve the overall quality of genetic services. EUGT also tackles widespread issues arising from genetic testing, including legal, health policies and health economic impact, intellectual property rights, ethical and social questions, including confidentiality and informed consent. Underpinning all these actions will be education of physicians and the public. With the help of Patient Support Groups, EUGT has created practical tools for the education of different stakeholders. In addition, this project becomes a model for similar initiatives in developing countries and will provide appropriate support in this regard. EUGT experts were involved in the drafting of OECD guidelines of Quality Assurance in Molecular Genetic Testing that represent a significant step towards the improvement of genetic testing worldwide (www.oecd.org/sti/biotechnology).