



From Science Fiction to Reality: American Consumers Ready to Act on Genetic Testing

Though current consumer sentiment and continued privacy concerns may leave doctors and even family members out of the genomic loop, according to Cogent Research study

CAMBRIDGE, MASS., (July 23, 2008) – From personal genome-mapping mail order kits to the increasing legal protection of results, genomics has moved from the scientific fringe to a seriously considered diagnostic tool for American consumers. According to new data from Cogent Research, 91 percent of Americans say they would have a genetic test for at least one disease condition, and most say they would do so regardless of their doctor’s opinion or input.

The study also shows that the majority of consumers feel informed about their family medical history and would consider taking genetic tests to determine if they carry disease traits in their own genetic code. Furthermore, an increasing number believe genetic testing will give them the ability to take a proactive approach to overall health and prevent diseases. In fact, many feel prepared to make choices based upon the results of the tests they receive, with most saying they would increase the frequency of check-ups (55 percent), and a small number willing to go all the way to preventative surgery (13 percent).

These and other findings are featured in Cogent Research’s 4th annual study of Americans’ attitudes toward using genetic information for health optimization. This comprehensive study, *Cogent Genomics Attitudes & Trends (CGAT)*[™], measures awareness, interest and preferences of genomics and its applications.

“The proliferation of in-home tests, from 23andMe, deCODEme and others, the equivalents of genetic house calls, may make genetic testing as common as in-home pregnancy tests. Our research proves that consumer knowledge and interest of genomics is on the rise, though conversations surrounding the benefits of testing – between patients and doctors– remain extremely low,” said Christy White, principal, Cogent Research. “There’s a paradox here: on the one hand, consumers feel more empowered about managing their health and interest in genetic testing is growing, yet many lack a full appreciation of when and how genetic information can be used, and how they should respond to the information they receive about their profile.”

And even while more consumers are considering genetic testing, most remain nervous about what would become of their data after testing, particularly regarding use or access by third parties such as insurance companies. This fear maybe somewhat diminished if more knew about the approval of significant privacy protection legislation. More than three-quarters of Americans are unaware of genomics legislation, including passage of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA) in May that protects Americans against discrimination based on their genetic information with respect to health insurance and employment.

Will doctors be left behind as testing goes mainstream? Probably not, according to Cogent’s data, but they may still be in the dark for now. A mere four percent of Americans have ever discussed genetic testing with their doctor, while 91 percent are willing to take a test. However, most Americans (88 percent) say they would talk with their doctor if they received a test indicating they were at risk for a specific disease; conversely only one in three would tell their families.

“Consumer action regarding genomics remains a challenge for many related parties: companies making advances in the industry, along with investors and funders, government bodies, the medical community and even within families themselves,” said White. “This research provides that rare glimpse into consumer perception regarding genomics, an industry moving from laboratories into the homes of consumers.”

Data in CGAT™ is based on a 100-question web survey of a representative sampling of 1,000 Americans, conducted between May 30 and June 9, 2008.

More information about the data and purchase options is available at:

www.cogentresearch.com.

About Cogent Research

Cogent Research helps clients gain clarity, obtain perspective, and formulate direction on critical business issues. Founded in 1996, Cogent provides custom research, syndicated research products, and evidence-based consulting to leading organizations in the financial services and life sciences industries. Through quality research, advanced analytics, and deep industry knowledge, Cogent Research delivers data-driven solutions and strategies that enable clients to better understand customers, define products, and shape market opportunities in order to increase revenues and grow the value of their products and brands.

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