American College of Neuropsychopharmacology

ACNP Statement on Genetic Testing for Neuropsychiatric Disorders

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 and anticoagulation therapy, treatment decisions can be guided by fairly robust and valid genomic information.

For neuropsychiatric disorders such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorders, the scientific basis for determining risk, 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 makes genetic testing in these realms scientifically unsupportable for general clinical use and certainly inappropriate in the direct-to-consumer arena.

Reference Materials:

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