

# Pathology group warns on HIV tests

DOMINIQUE HERMAN

CAPE TOWN: HIV home-testing kits may produce fast results, but they are frequently faulty or used incorrectly and people should not buy them, the National Pathology Group – a sub-group of the South African Medical Association – has warned.

Their statement was issued in response to a *Cape Times* exposé about a local student who was sold a home test last month by a pharmacist.

"Controls are not as exact as they should be," said Lynne Webber, a clinical virologist at the group's Lancet Laboratories, explaining that the group had no idea whether the kits were validated for efficacy when they entered the country.

Home-based tests were imported from all over the world and there was no quality con-

trol or set standard for their importation, the group statement said.

In addition, different areas of the world had different strains of HIV, and there was no surety that these kits would work for the strain prevalent in the South African population.

"In addition, people doing a test at home are by nature of the circumstances likely to be quite anxious. One can't be sure that they will read the instructions properly or carry them out correctly," the group said.

Telephone calls to multiple extensions in the communications, and inspectorate and law enforcement divisions of the Medicines Control Council went unanswered last week.

Visit [www.npg.co.za](http://www.npg.co.za) for a list of testing laboratories or call the Aids helpline on 080 001 2322 or 080 001 2312.