

Don't buy home-test HIV kits – warning

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 (NPG) – a sub group of the SA Medical Association – has warned.

Its statement was issued in response to a report about a Cape Town student who was sold a home test last month by a pharmacist without counselling to go with it.

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

A home test would always have to be verified by a laboratory test anyway and a false positive home test could provide unnecessary emotional anguish.

Home-based tests were imported from all over the world and there was no quality control or set standard for their importation, the NPG 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. – **Dominique Herman**