

## **Examining Current Practices of Genetic Counselors Regarding Multi-Ethnic Couples and the Future of Carrier Screening**

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Prenatal genetic carrier screening for inherited disorders is a common practice, usually determined by reported familial risk factors or ethnicity-based screening guidelines. However, the landscape of carrier screening is rapidly evolving due to two current and influential changes: the advent of pan-ethnic genetic screening panels and an increasingly diverse and heterogeneous patient population.

Genetic counselors represent professionals on the frontlines of this dual paradigm shift and can provide important perspectives about current practices of ethnicity-based carrier screening. As such, genetic counselors in the National Society of Genetic Counselors were surveyed to assess current opinions and practices, with questions highlighting pan-ethnic screening tools and carrier counseling for multi-ethnic couples.

Overall, the majority of genetic counselors were in agreement with the hypothesized perceived benefits, limitations and future directions of carrier screening, such as the restricted information from ethnicity-based carrier screening or the cost efficiency of pan-ethnic panels. However, many of the responses indicated some degree of ambivalence on factors that impact their decisions on what screening to offer to their patients. As of now, there are minimal professional recommendations or guidelines on the usage of pan-ethnic screens or on carrier screening for multi-ethnic patients or couples. Thus, it is clear that additional exploration is needed to best identify optimal protocol and methodology for the usage of these new carrier screens in an increasingly diverse and globalized society.