

Pathology group warns against do-it-yourself HIV testing kits

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IN 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 (NPG) - a sub-group of the South African Medical Association - has warned.

Their statement was issued in response to a report about a student who was sold a home test last month by a pharmacist without accompanying counselling.

"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. "We have no idea what their accuracy rate is which makes it worse," she added.

According to Avert, an international Aids charity and information source, it was illegal in many countries to sell HIV test kits to the public. There was no guarantee that purchased tests were genuine or capable of providing accurate results.

Visit www.aids.org.za for a list of testing laboratories or call the Aids helpline on 080 001 2322 or 080 001 2312.