

## **Medical genetics and genetic counseling in Chile.**

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### **Abstract**

In the South American Republic of Chile genetic counseling is not currently recognized as an independent clinical discipline, and in general is provided by physicians with training in clinical genetics. At present only one genetic counselor and 28 clinical geneticists practice in this country of over 16 million inhabitants. Pediatric dysmorphism constitutes the primary area of practice in clinical genetics. Although the country has a universal health care system and an adequate level of health care, genetic conditions are not considered a health care priority and there is a lack of clinical and laboratory resources designated for clinical genetics services. Multiple educational, cultural and financial barriers exist to the growth and development of genetic counseling services in Chile. However, during the last 10 years increased awareness of the importance of identifying individuals at risk for inherited cancer syndromes led to growing interest in the practice of cancer genetics.