Cost-effective analysis of genotyping using oral cells in the geriatric population

T. Juárez-Cedillo¹, S. Sánchez-García¹, J.F. Mould-Quevedo², C. García-Peña¹, J.J. Gallo³, F.A. Wagner⁴ and G. Vargas-Alarcón⁵

¹Epidemiologic and Health Service Research Unit, Aging Area, Mexican Institute of Social Security, Mexico City, Mexico
²Health Economic Research Unit, Mexican Institute of Social Security, Mexico City, Mexico
³Department of Family Practice and Community Medicine, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, USA
⁴School of Public Health and Policy, Department of Public Health Analysis, Drug Abuse Research Program, Morgan State University, Baltimore, MD, USA
⁵Department of Molecular Biology and Cardiovascular Diseases, Genomic and Proteomic Study Group, National Institute of Cardiology Ignacio Chávez, Mexico City, Mexico

Corresponding author: G. Vargas-Alarcón
E-mail: gvargas63@yahoo.com

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ABSTRACT. We evaluated the cost-effectiveness of using buccal swab brushes in comparison with blood samples for obtaining DNA for large epidemiological studies of the elderly population. The data reported here are from the third phase of the Integral Study of Depression among the Elderly in Mexico City’s Mexican Institute of Social Security, conducted in 2007. The total cost of the two procedures was determined. The measurement of effectiveness was the quality and quantity of DNA measured in ng/µL and the use of this DNA for the determination of apolipoprotein E (APO E) polymorphism by PCR. Similar rates of amplification were obtained with the two techniques. The cost of the buccal swab brushes, including sample collection and DNA extraction,
was US$16.63, compared to the cost per blood sample of US$23.35. Using the buccal swab, the savings was US$6.72 per patient (P < 0.05). The effectiveness was similar. Quantity and quality of DNA obtained were similar for the oral and blood procedures, demonstrating that the swab brush technique offers a feasible alternative for large-scale epidemiological studies.

**Key words:** Buccal swab brushes; DNA extraction; Elderly; Epidemiologic studies