

Prenatal Diagnosis of Autosomal Dominant Polycystic Kidney Disease With a DNA Probe

Polycystic kidney disease is one of the most common dominantly inherited disorders in man, occurring in about one in 1,000 individuals. Approximately 10% of all cases requiring renal dialysis and kidney transplant have autosomal dominantly inherited polycystic kidney disease of the adult type. Recently, the disorder had been localized to an abnormality of the short arm of chromosome 6, and

genetic linkage has been demonstrated to the alpha chain of human hemoglobin and phosphoglycolate phosphatase. With this knowledge, it is possible to diagnose "presymptomatic" carriers; most recently, prenatal diagnosis has been accomplished by DNA analysis of chorionic villus sampling.

The report, which is very straightforward, describes techniques that have been developed in the last few years. It is important, however, for the practitioner to be aware that these sorts of techniques have been developed and that analysis of family members is possible. Linkage can be determined and presymptomatic car-

riers can be detected, thus permitting prenatal diagnosis.

Reeders ST et al. *Lancet* 1986;7:6.

Editor's comment—*The remarkable advances that have been made in the last few years are very dramatic. Only three years ago, presymptomatic detection of individuals with polycystic kidney disease was not thought to be possible. Now it is possible to diagnose the entity before symptoms occur. Equally important is the fact that prenatal diagnosis during the first trimester using chorionic villus sampling is also possible. This allows prospective parents to make alternative decisions.*