

P050: Toward Biomedical and Health Testing Studies: Reassembling Testing Practices and Health Futures (EASST2026 Conference Krakow, Sep 8-11)

Traditional Open Panel | **Abstract submission until February 28, 2026:**

<https://nomadit.co.uk/conference/easst2026/p/18029#>

Convenors: Ingrid Metzler (Karl Landsteiner University of Health Sciences), Katerina Vlantoni (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens), Victoria Meklin (Alpen Adria Universität Klagenfurt), Mara Köhler (Karl Landsteiner University of Health Sciences, University of Vienna)

This panel invites contributions examining the epistemologies, ontologies, moralities and politics of testing in biomedicine and (public) health. We particularly seek papers that explore how testing is done in practice and how it might be done or configured otherwise.

Long Abstract

Over the past three decades, scholars in STS and related fields have engaged with the phenomenon of testing in biomedicine and health. Since the late 1980s, research has explored genetic testing as it has been envisioned and practiced in clinical, public health, and recreational contexts, as well as the moralities embedded in the regulatory frameworks shaping its uses. Simultaneously, scholars contributing to the sociology of diagnosis have investigated how testing contributes to making up people. More recently, studies have turned to testing in emerging fields such as precision medicine, paying particular attention to the political economies and governance of testing, or the rise of self-testing practices. Scholars have also analyzed the visions, uses, and infrastructures of testing in global health initiatives and in the management of disease outbreaks, most notably during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In this panel, we propose to use testing as a boundary object to open a dialogue between these diverse strands of research. Building on work developed under the labels of the “anthropology of medical testing” (Street and Kelly, 2021) and the “sociology of diagnosis and screening” (Petersen and Pienaar, 2021), we suggest the label “biomedical and health testing studies” to foster such engagement. **We invite empirical and conceptual contributions that address the epistemologies, ontologies, moralities, and politics of testing across biomedical and health domains.** Possible topics include testing in biomedical, public health, and global health contexts; self-testing and tinkering; and the absences, contestations, or refusals of testing. We particularly welcome contributions that explore how biomedical testing might be configured otherwise and how STS scholars can contribute to shaping the futures of health testing.

Petersen A and Pienaar K (2021) Testing for Life? Regimes of Governance in Diagnosis and Screening. *Science, Technology and Society* 26(1): 7–23.

Street A and Kelly AH (2021) Introduction: Diagnostics, Medical Testing, and Value in Medical Anthropology. *Medicine Anthropology Theory* 8(2). 2: 1–16.