Antithrombin deficiency is a rare disorder that affects males and females in equal numbers. Type I antithrombin deficiency is the most common subtype and is thought to occur in about one in every 3,000 to 5,000 people in the United States and is not limited to any particular ethnic group. It is estimated that approximately 1 percent of people who have venous thrombosis and embolism have congenital antithrombin deficiency. The acquired form of antithrombin deficiency is more prevalent than the congenital form of the disorder. A low blood level of antithrombin suggests that the patient may have antithrombin deficiency. However, it is important to keep in mind that many conditions can lower antithrombin levels (acute clots, heparin therapy, liver or kidney disease, etc.) without the patient having inherited antithrombin deficiency. Repeat testing should be done at a time when the patient is not ill, is not on heparin and does not have related medical problems.