

## Despite life saving benefits, many doctors reluctant to recommend genetic testing

Many American doctors may not support genetic testing in patients without a major family history of certain illnesses, suggests a new survey of physicians.

When presented with the hypothetical case of a middle-aged man with a family history of cancer in an aunt and uncle, more than a third of 180 U.S. doctors surveyed said they wouldn't recommend any genetic testing. Almost half would only recommend testing for cancer genes, and fewer than one in five would recommend whole-genome testing, according to the survey.

So what's going on? "Most doctors still feel uncomfortable with genetic testing," said Dr. Robert Klitzman, who studies genetic testing and is a professor of psychiatry at Columbia University's Joseph Mailman School of Public Health in New York City.

"Most doctors feel uncomfortable with knowing how to order genetic information, interpret it and counsel patients," explained Klitzman, who was not part of the study.

And even when genetic testing is done, the results may provide plenty of frustrating uncertainty about a patient's future health, he said.

In some cases where potential treatment options are clearer, such as women with histories of breast and ovarian cancer on one side of the family, doctors may be likely to order genetic tests, Klitzman said. Genetic tests can indicate that certain women have much higher risks of breast and ovarian cancers, according to the National Cancer Institute.

**Read full, original article:** [Many U.S. Doctors Wary of Genetic Testing: Survey](#)