

Breast cancer genetic tests, beyond BRCA, can help personalize treatment plan

When the results of a test wouldn't change how doctors manage a patient's care, most say it's not worth doing. But new tests for breast cancer risk mutations beyond the well-known BRCA genes would offer actionable information for many women and their doctors, a new study finds.

The BRCA1 and BRCA2 gene mutations put women at high risk for breast, ovarian and other cancers, but mutations of other genes are believed to confer extra risk as well.

Earlier in 2015, 17 genetic experts argued against testing for a wider panel of breast cancer-related gene mutations until they are proven to be valid and useful in clinical practice (see Reuters story of May 27, 2015 here: reut.rs/1TvOoDf).

"There's a lot of controversy even among experts," said the senior author of the new study, Dr. Leif W. Ellisen of Massachusetts General Hospital Cancer Center in Boston.

According to the new results, at least for some women, it would change their clinical management, he said.

Several of the authors of the new paper disclosed that they receive research funding, consult for or are employed by genetic testing companies like Myriad Genetics and Invitae Corporation.

Though these results indicate that additional genetic screening is clinically useful, some genetic test results will be uncertain, and it can be psychologically difficult for patients to deal with this uncertainty, Ellisen said.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: Testing for more breast cancer genes offers useful information