

Case report: Genetic Counseling Challenges:

Current research evidence does not easily answer if and when risk-reducing breast surgery in BRCA1/BRCA2 carriers with a previous diagnosis of ovarian cancer is appropriate. This is reflected by guidelines on breast cancer risk management in BRCA1/BRCA2 carriers, which do not give clear recommendations for women with a previous diagnosis of ovarian cancer but support discussion of the option of risk reducing breast surgery with women on a case by case basis (*NCCN, 2017*). Uncertainty about the recurrence of ovarian cancer featured prominently in the genetic counseling clinic. In discussing this, the genetic counselor was aware of the blurring boundaries between the role of clinical genetics and oncology. Fortunately, the genetic counselor had the support and close liaison with the patient's treating medical oncologist and his team. This case highlights the benefits of the multi-disciplinary approach.

When providing genetic counseling to women with ovarian cancer and a recently identified BRCA1/BRCA2 mutation, genetic counselors have breast cancer risk management on their agenda. Who raises this issue and when it is raised during the consultation depends on many factors, which may include the patient's pre-test understanding of BRCA1/BRCA2 mutation risks, family history and response to ovarian cancer treatment.

In this case, information on breast risk cancer management options, including risk reducing strategies were presented based on the patient's personal and family history. Also, risk reducing surgery was raised as having been proven to reduce breast cancer risk in BRCA1/BRCA2 carriers, but also as something not usually considered when the focus is on ovarian cancer treatment.

For many women, who are not interested in risk reducing mastectomy, further genetic counseling to address this time sensitive issue may not be required. For those interested in risk reducing mastectomy, review is needed to provide information on the potential risks and benefits as well to provide psychosocial support in decision making.

Part of genetic counseling acknowledged the importance of hope and optimism as strategies for coping with uncertainty. Some research papers show that fear of ovarian cancer recurrence is linked to reduced levels of hope (*Ozga, et al, 2015*) and that hope is an important factor