Evaluation of a Genetic Counseling Aid for Use in a Clinical Setting: A Pilot Study

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Background

- There is great variation in visual aids used during genetic counseling sessions for hereditary breast and ovarian cancer (HBOC). Furthermore, the acceptability of these aids has not been readily analyzed by patients seeking genetic counseling.
- Development of visually appealing health education material can make the material more appealing to high-risk individuals and may also enhance the individual’s knowledge.
- A genetic counseling aid (GCA), in the form of a booklet, was developed as a study tool for patients at risk for hereditary breast and ovarian cancer (HBOC) for use during genetic counseling (GC) sessions.

Objective

- To compare the utility of the genetic counseling aid (GCA) and printed educational material (PEM) in the clinical setting.

Study Tools

- Printed Educational Material (PEM)
- Genetic Counseling Aid (GCA)

Methodology

- Study Eligibility: Adult English-speaking female patients who presented for HBOC counseling. Ability to provide written informed consent.
- Participants completed 11-item standardized questionnaire developed by the National Center for Human Genome Research (NCHGR) Genetic Studies Consortium to measure knowledge of HBOC. The questionnaire was completed:
  1) prior to their genetic counseling (GC) session (Timepoint 1) and
  2) following their initial GC session (Timepoint 2).
- During Timepoint 2, patients completed additional questions to measure the acceptability of the aid used.
- Patients were randomized into one of two groups according to the day of visit. Those who presented for genetic counseling on non-Wednesdays were counseled using the GCA (Group A). Those who presented on Wednesdays were counseled using the PEM (Group B).

Conclusions

- Knowledge scores were comparable between the group counseled with the PEM and the group counseled with the GCA.
- The majority of participants from both groups indicated that they planned to share the information they learned with the friends and/or family.

References