

POSITION SUMMARY

Oncology Nursing Society Position on Cancer Predisposition Genetic Testing and Risk Assessment Counseling

Individuals who are at significantly increased genetic risk of cancer can be identified through cancer predisposition genetic testing. The ability to identify high-risk individuals who may benefit from cancer prevention and early cancer detection strategies can improve their length and quality of life. Despite apparent advantages, genetic testing raises ethical, legal, and social concerns and dilemmas associated with revealing an individual's genetic makeup.

It is the position of the Oncology Nursing Society that cancer risk assessment, counseling, and predisposition genetic testing are components of comprehensive cancer care available to high-risk individuals and families.

This includes

- Educating patients about the importance of sharing their genetic test results with close family members
- Assessing barriers to cancer predisposition genetic counseling and testing in diverse populations and ensuring that action is taken to reduce these barriers
- Providing ongoing education of healthcare providers, individuals at increased risk, and the lay public.

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