Perspectives in genetics

Empowering the medical community through education and insight.

The genetics of pancreatic cancer

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When Alex Trebek was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer earlier this year, it put a spotlight on a condition that hasn't received enough coverage: pancreatic cancer. With 56,000 adults diagnosed in the US every year, pancreatic cancer has quietly become the fourth leading cause of cancer death in men and women in the US.

While most instances of pancreatic cancer occur sporadically, approximately 20% of pancreatic cancer patients have a pathogenic germline variant. A person with one of these variants has an increased risk of malignancy compared to the average person.

Genetic testing can be used to uncover this risk.

Under current guidelines, 100% of patients with pancreatic cancer qualify for genetic testing. In addition to identifying the risk of malignancy, genetic information provides additional advantages to pancreatic cancer patients including:

- informing medical management
- connecting patients to precision therapies
- identifying clinical trial opportunities
- indicating if family members could also benefit from genetic testing

At Invitae, we believe that genetic information should be affordable and accessible to anyone who can benefit from it. As part of this mission, we recently launched the Detect Hereditary Pancreatic Cancer program—an initiative that provides sponsored, no-charge genetic testing and counseling for individuals diagnosed with pancreatic cancer.

This program is available to individuals in the US and Canada with pancreatic adenocarcinoma or pancreatic neuroendocrine tumors.

For more information about the Detect Hereditary Pancreatic Cancer program, click the link below.

Detect Hereditary Pancreatic Cancer Program

The Invitae Pancreatic Cancer Panel offers the broadest test for both endocrine and exocrine hereditary prostate cancer. This panel analyzes the genes most commonly associated with an increased risk for pancreatic cancer. Some of these genes are also associated with an increased risk of developing other cancer types including melanoma, breast, ovarian, and colon.

[1] Hu C *et al. JAMA.* 2018;319(23):2401-9.

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