Use of a Point-of-Care Tool to Improve Nurse Practitioner BRCA Knowledge

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Background: Women who have been identified with a BRCA mutation benefit from a multidisciplinary, individualized medical evaluation to reduce their risk of developing cancers. Identifying women who would gain from testing for BRCA mutations is essential. Nurse practitioners (NPs) as primary care providers are important members of the healthcare team and are instrumental in identifying and referring women for testing. However, studies have shown that NPs lack knowledge about and confidence in identifying women at risk.

Objectives: This project was undertaken to increase NP knowledge about assessing women at risk for the BRCA mutation and determining whether such testing is appropriate. This was accomplished through a BRCA risk assessment tool developed as a mobile health technology (MHT) application using the Ontario Family History Assessment Tool, one of the tools recommended by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force in its guidelines on BRCA-related cancer risk assessment, genetic counseling, and genetic testing to assist primary care providers in the assessment of women.

Methods: NPs attending an NP conference in the midwestern United States completed pre-test, post-test, and satisfaction surveys regarding use of the MHT application. The application included a point-of-care tool and educational information.

Findings: The participants demonstrated increased knowledge from pre- to post-test after use of the MHT application, with an overall positive evaluation.