



National Survey Reveals Low Public Awareness and Understanding of BRCA Testing for Risk of Inherited Breast and Ovarian Cancers Among American Women

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Seventy-two Percent (72 percent) of Adult Women in the U.S. Have Never Heard of BRCA Testing, yet 58 Percent Would Want to Know if They Carried High-Risk Gene Mutations

MADISON, N.J., Oct. 15, 2013 /PRNewswire/ -- According to the results of a recent Quest Diagnostics (NYSE: DGX) survey, seventy-two percent (72 percent) of American women age 18 and older have never heard of the *BRCA* test, a genetic test that can identify mutations in *BRCA1* and *BRCA2* genes associated with increased risk of inherited breast and ovarian cancers. The American Cancer Society estimates five to 10 percent of female breast cancers are due to inherited gene mutations, with *BRCA1* and *BRCA2* mutations the most commonly identified cause. The National Cancer Institute reports that *BRCA* mutations are also associated with increased risk of ovarian, male breast and other cancers. The results of the Quest Diagnostics survey, conducted online in October 2013 by Harris Interactive on their behalf among 1,460 U.S. women age 18 and older, is made available approximately four months after the U.S. Supreme Court's human gene patent decision created a new era of choice in *BRCA* testing for patients and their providers.

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(Logo: <http://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20131015/NE97496-LOGO-b>)

Also today, [Quest announced that it has introduced BRCAVantage™](#), a new choice in *BRCA* testing offered by the company that's intended to significantly broaden patient and provider access to services to help assess a woman's risk of inherited breast and ovarian cancers.

Survey findings document that low public awareness of *BRCA* testing is compounded by misconceptions about the *BRCA* test and pervasive confusion or concern about what to do with the information it provides. The survey also illuminates perceived impediments that may deter access to appropriate *BRCA* testing and insight into some of the issues that have surrounded its emergence.

Representative findings include:

- Among all U.S. women age 18 and older, 72 percent said they had never heard of the *BRCA* test
- Among the women who are at least somewhat familiar with *BRCA* testing, only 17 percent have discussed it with their healthcare provider
- Among American women who have not been tested, only 29 percent say they know what a genetic counselor is, and an even fewer nine percent say they know how to get in touch with one
- Although 58 percent of women who have not been tested indicated they would want to know for sure if they carried high-risk gene mutations, 82 percent said they would not know what to do with, or would not be sure what to do with, the results of *BRCA* testing information if they were to have the test

The survey also found that U.S. women were largely supportive of open access to *BRCA* data and multiple *BRCA* test providers:

- When women who have not had *BRCA* testing done were asked to speculate if they would consent to have identity-protected genetic data from their *BRCA* test shared to advance cancer research, 57 percent said yes
- More than half of U.S. women (51 percent) believe that having more companies offer *BRCA* testing will improve the quality and innovation of *BRCA* diagnostic options

Women who have not had *BRCA* testing done also indicated that affordability of *BRCA* testing would impact their decision to receive the test, with 73 percent of these women saying that the potential cost of a *BRCA* test would prevent them from getting one.

"These survey results suggest a significant gap in the public's practical understanding of *BRCA* testing at a time when a growing number of genetic tests are available to yield critical insights for guiding healthcare decision-making," said Jon R. Cohen, M.D., Senior Vice President and Chief Medical Officer, Quest Diagnostics. "While not every woman is indicated for *BRCA* testing, this survey's revelation that a sizeable number of women have never even heard of this important clinical tool is a wake-up call for those of us in the medical community eager to empower patients and clinicians to use diagnostic insights to make informed healthcare decisions."

"It is ironic that we share this survey's findings in October, breast cancer awareness month, given that the results glaringly reveal the need for greater patient awareness of the potential benefits and limitations of *BRCA* testing for assessing breast and ovarian cancer risks," said Dr. Cohen.

Survey Methodology

This survey was conducted online within the United States by Harris Interactive on behalf of Quest Diagnostics from October 1-3, 2013 among 1,460 U.S. women ages 18 and older. This online survey is not based on a probability sample and therefore no estimate of theoretical sampling error can be calculated. For complete survey methodology, including weighting variables, please contact Jayme Maniatis at Schwartz MSL at jayme.maniatis@schwartzmsl.com.

About Quest Diagnostics

Quest Diagnostics is the world's leading provider of diagnostic information services that patients and doctors need to make better healthcare decisions. The company offers the broadest access to diagnostic information services through its network of laboratories and patient service centers, and provides interpretive consultation through its extensive medical and scientific staff. Quest Diagnostics is a pioneer in developing innovative diagnostic tests and advanced healthcare information technology solutions that help improve patient care. Additional information is available at

QuestDiagnostics.com. Follow us at [Facebook.com/QuestDiagnostics](https://www.facebook.com/QuestDiagnostics) and [Twitter.com/QuestDX](https://twitter.com/QuestDX).

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