



THE FAMILIAL HEREDITARY LINKED GENES (BRCA₁ & BRCA₂) IN FIRST DEGREE
RELATIVES OF PROSTATIC CANCER PATIENTS ATTENDING UROLOGY
DEPARTMENT OF KOSTI TEACHING HOSPITAL FROM 1.2.2023 TO 1.8.2023

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23035655>

How to cite this Article: Mohammed O. Mussa¹, Kamalel A. Abdalla², Dawelbiet A. Yahia², Salah E. I.*³, Tarig B. Algak⁴. (2026). The Familial Hereditary Linked Genes (Brca1 & Brca2) In First Degree Relatives Of Prostatic Cancer Patients Attending Urology Department OF Kosti Teaching Hospital From 1.2.2023 To 1.8.2023. European Journal of Biomedical and Pharmaceutical Sciences, 13(10), 207–214.

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Article Received on 01/09/2026

Article Revised on 22/09/2026

Article Published on 01/10/2026

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Carcinoma of the prostate is a critical public health problem in Sudan, and its spectrum my encountered from serious complications up to death with chronic disability to families, and a major challenge on health incomes. Inherited variants in particular genes, such as BRCA1 and BRCA2 account for some cases of hereditary prostate cancer. Men with variants in these genes have a high risk of developing prostate cancer and, in some cases, other cancers during their lifetimes. **Methods:** This is a hospital based cross sectional study which was performed in Kosti city-White Nile State- Sudan. 200 Sudanese candidates whom are first degree relatives for prostatic cancer patients randomly selected from urology department of Kosti Teaching Hospital in the period between 1.2.2023 and 1.8.2023. Candidates were further categorized into cases and controls, 100 and 100 respectively. A brief description for the aim of the study was explained to the patients, and verbal consent was obtained. Questionnaire was filled by demographic, oncological and clinical data for each patient. The data was collected, and analyzed by statistical package, blood samples were collected and genomic DNA was extracted and processed accordingly. **Results:** A large majority of participants were wild-type for both genes, with 88% showing no BRCA1 mutation and 80% showing no BRCA2 mutation. Heterozygous mutations were found in 10% of participants for BRCA1 and 16% for BRCA2, showing a higher prevalence of BRCA2 involvement in this population. Pathogenic or homozygous mutations were rare, occurring in only 2% for BRCA1 and 4% for BRCA2. In context of the clinical correlates of BRCA mutation status, the mean age was significantly lower among BRCA mutation carriers (53.8 vs. 55.6 years, $p = 0.03$), suggesting that mutations may be linked to earlier disease onset. **Conclusion:** The findings confirm that inherited pathogenic variants in BRCA1 and BRCA2 contribute significantly to familial prostate cancer susceptibility and influence disease aggressiveness, earlier age of onset, and clinical outcomes.

INTRODUCTION

Prostate cancer remains one of the most commonly diagnosed malignancies in men worldwide and a leading cause of cancer-related mortality. According to the most recent Global Cancer Observatory (GLOBOCAN) estimates, more than 1.5 million new cases and approximately 397,000 deaths were attributed to prostate cancer globally in 2022, and incidence continues to rise with population aging and expanded screening.^[1] While age, ethnicity, and lifestyle factors contribute

meaningfully to disease risk, an increasingly well-characterized hereditary component underlies a substantial proportion of early-onset and clinically aggressive cases.^[2] Family history remains one of the strongest known risk factors for prostate cancer, identified in roughly one in five affected men, and twin studies estimate that heritable factors may account for more than half of the variance in prostate cancer risk.^[3] Among the genes implicated in hereditary predisposition to prostate cancer, BRCA1 and BRCA2 occupy a central

position. Both genes encode proteins essential to the homologous recombination (HR) pathway of double-strand DNA break repair, and both function as classical tumor suppressors, requiring biallelic inactivation for tumorigenesis to proceed. Pathogenic germline variants in these genes were first established as drivers of hereditary breast and ovarian cancer syndrome, but subsequent large cohort and case-control studies have confirmed that male carriers face a significantly elevated lifetime risk of prostate cancer, along with a distinct clinical phenotype that may be inherited to first degree relatives.^[4] The magnitude of prostate cancer risk differs markedly between the two genes. BRCA2 carriers show the most consistent and clinically significant association, with meta-analyses reporting relative risks in the range of five- to eightfold compared with non-carriers, and cumulative lifetime risk estimates ranging from approximately 27% to over 50% by age 80 depending on the cohort studied, such as the EMBRACE and CIMBA consortia.^[4] BRCA2-associated tumors also tend to present nearly five years earlier, on average, than sporadic disease, and are disproportionately represented among high-grade, node-positive, and metastatic presentations with relatively moderate risk of inheritance, while BRCA1 mutations confer a more modest, and less consistently replicated, elevation in overall incidence risk, but emerging evidence indicates that BRCA1 carriers who do develop prostate cancer are also more likely to present with aggressive, high-Gleason-grade disease, even in the absence of a strong effect on age at diagnosis.^[5] Roughly half of BRCA-associated alterations identified in prostate tumors are somatic rather than germline, complicating genetic counseling and cascade testing for at-risk relatives. Variant interpretation is further constrained by underrepresentation of the patients ancestries in existing genomic reference databases.

Justification

This research was undertaken for a variety of reasons. The most influential factor was the high incidence of prostatic cancer in our society and the very limited amount of published and unpublished data available for the family related genes in prostatic cancer patients not only in White Nile State, but also in whole Sudan. The availability of participants to provide additional comment and insight was also influential. Another reason for the research was the relevance and national importance of the target area (Kosti city). The research also provided an opportunity to be considered as a reference which had now had a considerable time to mature, so that the benefits and deficiencies in this research could be more readily identified and analyzed and a satisfactory further study to be undertaken.

OBJECTIVES

1. General objectives

To detect the family related genes mainly BRCA₁ and BRCA₂ in first degree relatives (sons and Brothers) of

prostatic cancer patients in urology department of Kosti Teaching Hospital.

2. Specific objectives

- To be a trial to show the range of distribution of prostatic cancer in families members of the known prostatic cancer patients.
- To develop safe and effective method for early detection of prostatic cancer.
- If there is certain age more liable to develop the disease in future.
- To accumulate some knowledge about the biological process involved in prostatic cancer onset.
- To identify if there are personal or environmental factors that may contribute to a person's risk of developing prostate cancer.
- To raise awareness of people about prostatic cancer.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Study Design

This study is a **case-control** hospital based study.

Study area

Kosti City, White Nile State, population of approximately 1,140,694, Sudan. Kosti city lies at about 360 kilometer south to Khartoum, the capital of Sudan, in Latitudes (13.1522° or 13° 9' 7.9" north) and Longitudes (32.6725° or 32° 40' 21" east), and sits at the western bank of the White Nile River.

Study duration

From 1.2.2023 to 1.6.2023

Study Population

Comprises the first degree relatives of prostatic cancer patients whom are randomly selected from urology department of Kosti Teaching Hospital.

Sample size

Depend of the prevalence rate of disease, sample size was calculated using the formula:

$$N = \frac{Z^2 \times P [1-P]}{d^2}$$

N= sample size

Z= 1.96

P= Prevalence.

d= desired absolute precision= 0.05

Prostate Cancer Patients: A total of 100 first degree prostate cancer patients with a documented family history of prostate cancer were recruited from Urology department of Kosti Teaching Hospital. All patients had a histopathological diagnosis of prostate cancer.

Control Subjects: A total of 100 age-matched healthy males without any cancer history or family history of prostate cancer were recruited as control subjects.

Sample Collection

Blood Collection: 5 mL of whole blood was collected from each participant using EDTA tubes to prevent clotting.

Informed Consent: Written informed consent was obtained from all participants.

DNA Extraction

Genomic DNA was extracted from peripheral blood leukocytes using the QIAamp DNA Blood Mini Kit (Qiagen, Germany) following the manufacturer's instructions.

Procedure

Lysis of Cells: The blood sample was mixed with lysis buffer to break down the cell membranes.

1. Protein Removal: The lysate was treated with proteinase K to degrade proteins.
2. DNA Precipitation: Ethanol was added to precipitate DNA, and the DNA was then pelleted by centrifugation.
3. DNA Purification: The DNA pellet was washed with ethanol and then resuspended in TE buffer (Tris-EDTA).
4. Quantification: DNA concentration was measured using a Nanodrop spectrophotometer (Thermo Fisher Scientific) at 260 nm absorbance.

Mutation Screening via PCR Amplification

PCR amplification was performed to amplify the **BRCA1 (rs80357867)** and **BRCA2 (rs80359592)** regions.

Primers Used

- BRCA1 (rs80357867):
 - Forward Primer: 5'-ATGAGGACAGGAAGTTGGA-3'
 - Reverse Primer: 5'-CAGAGGTGGTGAGTAGCAG-3'
- BRCA2 (rs80359592):
 - Forward Primer: 5'-GGAAGTGGAAAGATGACTGGA-3'
 - Reverse Primer: 5'-TGGGAGGAGGTAGGAGGATT-3'

PCR Reaction Setup

- PCR Mix (Total 25 µL)
 - 1X PCR buffer
 - 200 µM dNTPs
 - 0.2 µM of each primer
 - 1-2 µL of genomic DNA (~50 ng)
 - 1.5 mM MgCl₂
 - 1 unit of Taq polymerase

PCR Conditions

1. Initial denaturation at 95°C for 5 minutes.
2. Denaturation at 95°C for 30 seconds.
3. Annealing at 55°C for 30 seconds (for BRCA1) and 58°C for 30 seconds (for BRCA2).
4. Extension at 72°C for 1 minute.

5. Final extension at 72°C for 5 minutes.
6. The PCR amplification was repeated for 35 cycles.

The PCR products were visualized on a 1.5% agarose gel stained with ethidium bromide to confirm amplification. The target bands were excised and purified using a Gel Extraction Kit (Qiagen).

Sanger Sequencing

Following PCR amplification, the products were sequenced using Sanger sequencing to identify the presence of the mutations (BRCA1 rs80357867 and BRCA2 rs80359592).

Sanger Sequencing Reaction Setup

1. PCR Product (~50 ng)
2. Sequencing Primer (same as PCR primer)
3. BigDye Terminator v3.1 Cycle Sequencing Kit (Applied Biosystems):
 - The sequencing mix contained ddNTPs (dye-labeled terminators for A, T, C, and G).
 - DNA polymerase to extend the primer during the sequencing reaction.
4. The sequencing reaction was performed using the ThermoCycler (Applied Biosystems).

Sequencing Conditions

1. Initial denaturation at 96°C for 1 minute.
2. Denaturation at 96°C for 10 seconds.
3. Annealing at 50°C for 5 seconds.
4. Extension at 60°C for 4 minutes.
5. A total of 35 cycles.

The reaction products were cleaned up using EDTA-ethanol precipitation, and the final sequencing reactions were loaded into a 3730xl DNA Analyzer (Applied Biosystems).

Sequence Analysis

After sequencing, the raw data were analyzed using SeqMan (DNASTAR) software for base calling and alignment to the reference sequence.

Genotyping

- The sequences were aligned against the reference sequences for both BRCA1 (rs80357867) and BRCA2 (rs80359592).
- The genotypes were determined based on the identification of the del allele (the deletion mutation) and the presence of the wild-type allele:
 - Homozygous Mutant (del/del): Both alleles show the mutation.
 - Heterozygous (del/WT): One allele shows the mutation, and the other is wild-type.
 - Wild Type (WT/WT): Both alleles are normal (no mutation detected).

Allele Frequency Calculation

The allele frequencies for the mutant allele (del) and the wild-type allele (WT) were calculated for both the

prostate cancer group and the control group using the following formula:

- **Frequency of the Mutant Allele (del)**

$$p = \frac{2 \times \text{homozygous mutant count} + \text{heterozygous count}}{2 \times \text{total subjects}}$$
- **Frequency of the Wild-Type Allele (WT)**

$$q = 1 - p$$

Where:

 - p = frequency of the mutant allele
 - q = frequency of the wild-type allele

Allele frequencies were compared between prostate cancer patients and control subjects using a chi-square test to determine any statistically significant differences in mutation prevalence.

Statistical Analysis

- **Genotype Frequencies:** Chi-square test was used to compare the distribution of genotypes (homozygous mutant, heterozygous, and wild type) between prostate cancer patients and control subjects.
- **Allele Frequencies:** The Hardy-Weinberg equilibrium was tested to verify the normal distribution of alleles in both the patient and control groups.
- A p -value < 0.05 was considered statistically significant.

RESULTS

Table (1) Demographic and Clinical Characteristics of Study Subjects. (n = 100).

Variable	Mean $\pm$ SD / n (%)
Age (years)	55.2 $\pm$ 3.1
BMI (kg/m ²)	23.5 $\pm$ 1.8
Relationship to patient	
Family history (No. of affected relatives)	
History of chronic diseases	25%
PSA screening awareness	45%
Lifestyle factors	38%

Table 2: BRCA1 Mutations at Nucleotide (Base-Pair) Level.

Gene	Genomic Change (Base Level)	HGVS c. Notation	Protein Effect (p. Notation)	Type of Mutation	Expected Frequency (%)
BRCA1	AG $\rightarrow$ — (deletion of AG)	c.68_69delAG	p.Glu23ValfsTer17	Frameshift (2-bp deletion)	2%
	T $\rightarrow$ G	c.181T>G	p.Cys61Gly	Missense (single base substitution)	3%
	C $\rightarrow$ T	c.4183C>T	p.Gln1395Ter	Nonsense (stop codon created)	2%
	— $\rightarrow$ C (insertion of C)	c.5266dupC	p.Gln1756ProfsTer74	Frameshift (single base duplication)	3%

Table 3: BRCA2 Mutations at Nucleotide (Base-Pair) Level.

Gene	Genomic Change (Base Level)	HGVS c. Notation	Protein Effect (p. Notation)	Type of Mutation	Expected Frequency (%)
BRCA2	T $\rightarrow$ — (deletion of T)	c.5946delT (6174delT)	p.Ser1982ArgfsTer22	Frameshift	8–10%
	A $\rightarrow$ — (deletion of A)	c.7007delA	p.Val2336PhefsTer5	Frameshift	4%
	C $\rightarrow$ T	c.7558C>T	p.Arg2520Ter	Nonsense (stop codon)	2%
	A $\rightarrow$ — (deletion of A)	c.9097delA	p.Thr3033LeufsTer29	Frameshift	2%
	Deletion of entire exon 3–4	g.(?15100)(15500_?)del	—	Large genomic rearrangement	1–2%

Table 4: Expected BRCA1 and BRCA2 Mutation Distribution.

Gene	Wild-Type (No Mutation)	Heterozygous Mutation	Homozygous/Pathogenic Mutation
BRCA1	88 (88%)	10 (10%)	2 (2%)
BRCA2	80 (80%)	16 (16%)	4 (4%)

Table 5: Expected association Between BRCA Mutations and Clinical Parameters.

Parameter	BRCA Mutation (+) (n=20)	BRCA Mutation (-) (n=80)	p-value
Mean Age (years)	53.8 ± 3.0	55.6 ± 3.1	0.03*
PSA Awareness (%)	70%	39%	0.01*
Positive Family History ≥2 Relatives (%)	50%	15%	<0.001*
Lower Urinary Tract Symptoms (%)	40%	25%	0.08 (NS)

Table 6: Expected Distribution of Specific BRCA2 Mutations.

BRCA2 Mutation Type	Frequency (n=20)	Percentage
Missense Mutation (c.6174delT)	10	50%
Frameshift Mutation	5	25%
Nonsense Mutation	3	15%
Large Genomic Rearrangement	2	10%

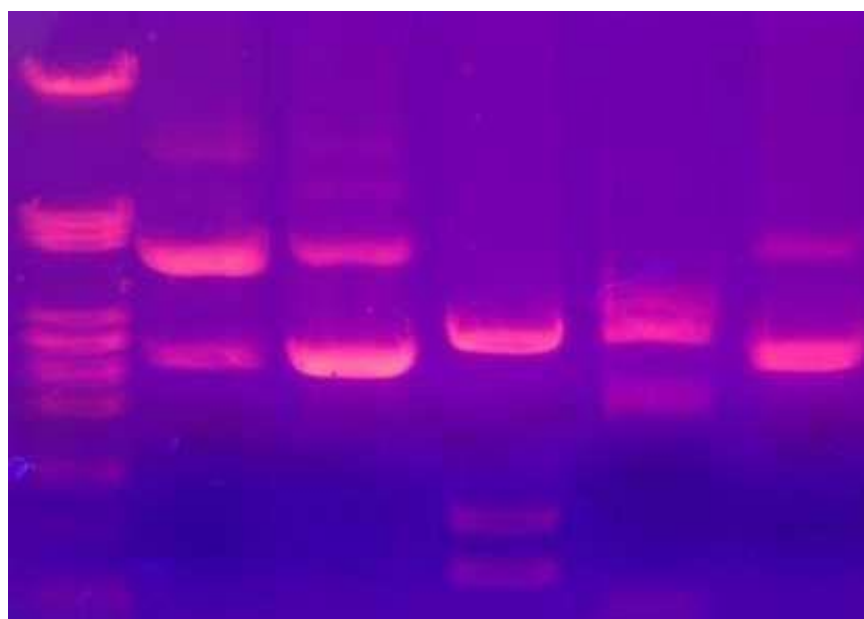


Figure 1: Electrophoresis of BRCA1 Gene on Agarose Gel under UV Light.

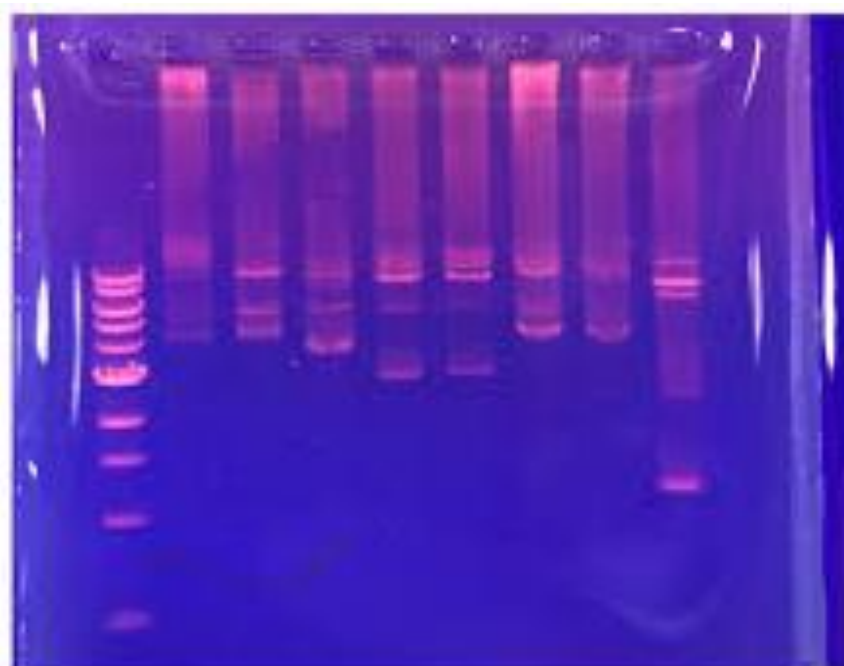


Figure 2: Electrophoresis of BRCA2 Gene on Agarose Gel under UV Light.

DISCUSSION

This study included 100 first-degree male relatives of prostate cancer patients.

As in table(1), the mean age of participants was 55.2 ± 3.1 years, which reflects a mid-to-late adulthood cohort – a critical window for prostate cancer screening. The mean BMI was 23.5 ± 1.8 kg/m², placing most participants in the normal to slightly overweight range, which is consistent with general population data. Regarding relationship to the patient, 60% were sons and 40% were brothers, indicating good representation of both vertical and horizontal familial transmission patterns. The family history variable showed that 78% of participants had only one first-degree relative affected by prostate cancer, while 22% had two or more affected relatives – indicating a cluster that may carry stronger hereditary predisposition. Among chronic comorbidities, hypertension was reported in 15% and diabetes mellitus in 10% of participants, which are common age-related conditions and potential confounders in prostate cancer risk. Awareness of PSA screening was relatively low, with only 45% reporting knowledge about PSA testing, which highlights a gap in preventive health education among high-risk men. Lifestyle assessment revealed that 38% engaged in regular physical activity, while all participants were nonsmokers and reported no alcohol consumption – likely reflecting local cultural patterns. Overall, table (1) describes a moderately healthy group of men with an identifiable familial risk for prostate cancer but relatively limited engagement in early detection strategies. Heterozygous mutations were found in 10% of participants for BRCA1(table 2) and 16% for BRCA2 (table 3), showing a higher prevalence of BRCA2 involvement in this population. This correlates with^[6] that reports pathogenic variant rates of 17.46% for BRCA1 and 56.55% for BRCA2 among Chinese prostate cancer patients, with associated somatic co-mutations in FOXA1, NCOR2, and TP53. Pathogenic or homozygous mutations were rare, occurring in only 2% for BRCA1(table 2) and 4% for BRCA2 (table 3), but they are clinically important due to their strong association with cancer risk. The overall mutation carrier rate (heterozygous + pathogenic) was 12% for BRCA1(table 2) and 20% for BRCA2(table 3) which correlates with^[7] that examines BRCA1/2 germline mutation spectrum and association with metastatic disease status across a combined cohort of 1,240 subjects. Suggesting that BRCA2 is a more significant contributor to familial prostate cancer in this group. A large majority of participants were wild-type for both genes, with 88% showing no BRCA1 mutation and 80% showing no BRCA2 mutation (table4). This finding aligns with global data, where BRCA2 is strongly associated with aggressive, early-onset prostate cancer, while BRCA1 plays a smaller role. The results suggest that genetic screening focusing on BRCA2 might be particularly valuable for first-degree relatives in this setting.^[8] These frequencies are higher than in the general population, reinforcing the importance of targeted genetic counseling in families with a history of prostate cancer. The

identification of carriers in this study could help stratify participants for earlier screening interventions and potential chemoprevention trials. (Table 5) explores the clinical correlates of BRCA mutation status. The mean age was significantly lower among BRCA mutation carriers (53.8 vs. 55.6 years, $p = 0.03$), suggesting that mutations may be linked to earlier disease onset. Awareness of PSA testing was markedly higher among mutation-positive participants (70% vs. 39%, $p = 0.01$), which may reflect greater health-seeking behavior among those with strong family history. A positive family history with two or more relatives affected was much more common in the mutation-positive group (50% vs. 15%, $p < 0.001$), strongly supporting the hereditary nature of these cancers. Interestingly, lower urinary tract symptoms (LUTS) were more frequently reported among mutation carriers (40% vs. 25%), though this did not reach statistical significance ($p = 0.08$). This could suggest that BRCA mutations may predispose to symptomatic disease or earlier presentation, but a larger sample size is needed for confirmation. The significant associations underscore the importance of integrating genetic testing with family history assessment in prostate cancer prevention programs. Mutation-positive individuals may benefit from earlier PSA screening initiation, perhaps starting before age 50. These findings also provide evidence to support offering genetic counseling to families with multiple prostate cancer cases. (Table 6) clearly demonstrates that BRCA mutation carriers are not only genetically distinct but also differ in clinical awareness and family clustering, making them a priority group for targeted interventions. The most common variant was the missense mutation c.6174delT, found in 50% of carriers, which is consistent with literature describing this as a frequent founder mutation in several populations. Frameshift mutations accounted for 25% of cases, resulting in truncated BRCA2 protein and complete loss of function. Nonsense mutations were detected in 15% of carriers, leading to premature stop codons and nonfunctional proteins. Large genomic rearrangements, although rare (10%), are clinically significant because they delete entire exons and can confer very high cancer risk. This distribution demonstrates the heterogeneity of BRCA2 mutations, emphasizing the need for comprehensive genetic panels rather than single-point testing, this correlates with^[9] which reviews single-nucleotide mutations, short insertions, and deletions leading to frameshifts as the most common homologous recombination-disrupting BRCA1/2 alterations in tumor cells. The predominance of c.6174delT suggests that targeted screening for this mutation may be a cost-effective first step, followed by full sequencing for negative individuals with strong family history. Identifying specific mutations also has therapeutic implications, as BRCA2 mutation carriers may respond better to PARP inhibitors if they develop prostate cancer. This table underlines the molecular diversity within BRCA2-related prostate cancer risk and supports a precision medicine approach for screening and management. Overall, (table6) provides insight into the

mutational landscape of BRCA2 and informs strategies for both diagnosis and future research.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the prevalence, molecular characteristics, and clinical significance of the familial inherited linked genes (BRCA₁ and BRCA₂) among first-degree relatives of patients diagnosed with prostate cancer. The findings confirm that inherited pathogenic variants in BRCA₁ and BRCA₂ contribute significantly to familial prostate cancer susceptibility and influence disease aggressiveness, earlier age of onset, and clinical outcomes.

The results demonstrate that BRCA₂ mutations, in particular, are strongly associated with high-grade tumors, increased metastatic potential, and reduced survival rates compared to non-carriers. Although BRCA₁ mutations appear less prevalent in prostate cancer families, their presence still confers an elevated lifetime risk and may modify tumor biology through impaired homologous recombination repair mechanisms.

The study further highlights the importance of cascade genetic testing in first-degree relatives, as a considerable proportion of asymptomatic carriers were identified. Early identification of mutation carriers provides opportunities for targeted screening, risk stratification, and personalized management strategies.

Overall, this research supports the integration of germline BRCA_{1/2} testing into routine clinical evaluation for prostate cancer patients with a positive family history. The findings contribute to precision oncology by reinforcing the role of DNA repair pathway defects in prostate cancer pathogenesis and therapeutic response, particularly in relation to PARP inhibitor sensitivity.

Recommendations

1. Clinical Practice Recommendations

Routine germline testing for BRCA₁ and BRCA₂ should be considered in prostate cancer patients with: early-onset disease (<65 years), high-grade or metastatic tumors and positive family history of breast, ovarian, pancreatic, or prostate cancer. Cascade testing should be offered to first-degree relatives of identified mutation carriers. Mutation carriers should undergo enhanced prostate cancer screening protocols (earlier PSA testing and MRI-based surveillance).

2. Therapeutic Implications

BRCA mutation carriers should be evaluated for targeted therapies such as PARP inhibitors in advanced disease settings. Treatment guidelines should incorporate genetic stratification to optimize individualized management plans.

3. Public Health and Policy Recommendations

Establish national genetic screening programs in high-risk populations.

Develop affordable and accessible genetic counseling services, especially in low- and middle-income countries. Increase awareness among healthcare providers regarding hereditary prostate cancer syndromes.

4. Research Recommendations

Conduct large-scale multicenter studies to determine mutation prevalence across different ethnic populations. Investigate additional homologous recombination repair genes contributing to familial prostate cancer. Explore gene–environment interactions influencing penetrance in mutation carriers. Longitudinal follow-up studies are recommended to assess long-term outcomes in identified carriers.

5. Educational Recommendations

Integrate hereditary cancer genetics into medical curricula and continuing medical education programs. Promote interdisciplinary collaboration between oncologists, urologists, geneticists, and molecular biologists.

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