

Reviewer's report

Title: Risk perception after genetic counseling in patients with increased risk of cancer

Version: 1 **Date:** 24 March 2009

Reviewer: Ellen Matloff

Reviewer's report:

Dear Authors,

The impact of genetic counseling on risk perception is certainly an important issue, and one that has been studied thoroughly over the past decade.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. You state that the objective cancer risk was estimated for every patient by your geneticist. How? Using which methods, models, papers or tables?
2. You state that affected patients were considered to have 'double risk'; risk for developing metastatic disease and risk for a new primary. However, these risks are completely distinct and are based on very different sets of criteria (personal and family history vs. number of affected lymph nodes, stage to cancer, etc.). Please clarify this in your text.
3. The greatest limitation of this study -- patients were referred due to a family history of breast, ovarian, colorectal or gastric cancer. And yet you state on p. 6 that, 'the mean risk of cancer in each risk group can be roughly estimated as the mean value of both breast and colon cancer risks'. This is not valid. A patient with a family history of gastric cancer, for instance, might not estimate that their own risk of colon or breast cancer would be greatly increased; and, most likely, they would be correct. These numbers cannot be 'lumped together'.

Minor Essential Revisions

4. Your categorization of risk groups (p. 6) as population, low, moderate or high risk is questionable. Most experts would not categorize a 20% lifetime risk of breast cancer as 'low' or a 45% lifetime risk as moderate.
5. The English translation is awkward in places. Please have an editor help you with these transitions.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the

statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.