

Certified Genetic Counselors



A Crucial Clinical Resource in the Management of Patients with Suspected Hereditary Cancer Syndromes

Zohra Ali-Khan Catts, MS, LGC^{a,*}, Heather Hampel, MS, LGC^b

KEYWORDS

• Cancer genetic counseling • Genetic counselor • Cancer genetics • Genetic testing

KEY POINTS

- The cancer genetic counselor is critical in the management of patients with cancer who may have an inherited susceptibility to cancer.
- Patients with cancer with an early age at diagnosis, multiple primary tumors, rare tumors, or a family history of multiple cases of the same or related cancers should be referred for cancer genetic counseling.
- The identification of patients with hereditary cancer susceptibility syndromes can aid in surgical decision-making.

WHAT IS GENETIC COUNSELING?

The National Society of Genetic Counseling defines genetic counseling as “The process of helping people understand and adapt to the medical, psychological, and familial implications of genetic contributions to disease.” This process integrates interpretation of family and medical histories to assess the chance of disease occurrence or recurrence; education about inheritance, testing, management, prevention, resources, and research; and counseling to promote informed choices and adaptation to the risk or condition.¹

The authors have nothing to disclose.

^a Christiana Care Health System, Helen F. Graham Cancer Center and Research Institute, 4701 Ogletown Stanton Road, Suite 2231, Newark, DE 19713-2079, USA; ^b The Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center, 2001 Polaris Parkway, Columbus, OH 43240, USA

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: ZAli-KhanCatts@Christianacare.org

Surg Oncol Clin N Am 24 (2015) 653–666

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.soc.2015.06.005>

surgonc.theclinics.com

1055-3207/15/\$ – see front matter © 2015 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

WHAT IS A CERTIFIED GENETIC COUNSELOR?

A certified genetic counselor is a master's level trained health care professional with a specialized degree in genetic counseling from an accredited genetic counseling training program that has passed the National Board Examination for Certification administered currently by the American Board of Genetic Counseling (ABGC) and previously by the American Board of Medical Genetics. At the time of this publication there are 31 accredited training programs for genetic counseling in the United States and three in Canada. A complete and up-to-date list is found at <http://gceducation.org/Pages/Accredited-Programs.aspx>. Genetic counselors are experienced in areas of medical genetics and counseling. By combining their knowledge of basic science, medical genetics, epidemiologic principles, and counseling theory with their skills in genetic risk assessment, education, interpersonal communication, and counseling, they provide services to clients and their families for a diverse set of genetic or genomic indications. Certification of genetic counselors provides assurance that the individual has met the minimum standards and competencies to practice.

Why Is Certification Important

Certification is important because it ensures a genetic counselor has graduated from an accredited genetic counseling program,² which means they have met the established standards for professional practice through documentation of specialized training as required for graduation from an accredited training program, and received a passing score on the ABGC Certification Examination. Once this has been done, the Certified Genetic Counselor credential is granted by the ABGC. Genetic counselors certified before 1996 by ABGC or the American Board of Medical Genetics do not have a time-limited certification; however, voluntary recertification is strongly encouraged and demonstrates an ongoing commitment to lifelong learning in a rapidly growing and dynamic field. Recertification is required for genetic counselors that were certified in 1996 or later and is important to ensure that skills and knowledge are maintained. In addition, certification and recertification is becoming more significant for licensing, insurance reimbursement, credentialing, hospital credentialing, and professional advancement and employment opportunities.³

ARE GENETIC COUNSELORS LICENSED?

Genetic counselors are required to hold a license to practice in 15 states at the time of this publication. Four additional states have passed licensure and are in the process of drafting the rules and regulations. The current up-to-date list of states that license genetic counselors is found at <http://nsgc.org/p/cm/ld/fid=19>. There is an increasing need to obtain licensure in the remaining 31 states. Licensure of genetic counselors is paramount because it aids in protecting the public from potential harms that may result from this occupation remaining unregulated. Harm caused by untrained individuals attempting to provide genetic counseling includes the following:

- Misinformation regarding genetic risk or lack of risk
- Misunderstanding of the implications of genetic information, such as family history or test results, which can lead to
 - Unnecessary medical treatment and/or surgery
 - Lack of prevention or disease-monitoring strategies
 - Irreversible management decisions
 - Avoidable fear, anxiety, and guilt

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/3998571>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/3998571>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)