Ordering the Correct Genetic Test: Implications for Oncology and Primary Care Healthcare Professionals

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Genetic testing for hereditary cancer syndromes is becoming increasingly more common. Once a mutation is detected in a family, other family members can undergo single-site mutation testing to determine if they have inherited the increased risk for developing cancer, with the intent of providing tailored and appropriate cancer prevention and early detection measures. Ordering the correct single-site test is critical to providing appropriate recommendations for cancer prevention and early detection.

Case Study

An advanced practice credentialed genetic nurse (APNG) was contacted by J.M., a 26-year-old single mother, about obtaining genetic testing for a known family mutation in the MSH2 gene, which is one of the genes associated with hereditary nonpolyposis colorectal cancer (HNPCC) who had a potentially dangerous outcome because of incorrect single-site genetic testing. The case study is followed by commentary on issues related to single-site genetic testing and how to prevent such problems.