

Cancer Genetics evidence-based care



SAFETY INFORMATION 002/26

Issue date:	20 April 2026
Content reviewed by:	All LHDs
Distributed to:	Chief Executives; Directors of Clinical Governance; Director, Regulation and Compliance Unit
KEY MESSAGE:	Use of expert advice, evidence and eviQ guidelines to guide cancer genetic testing and risk management of patients with a cancer predisposition or those affected by a cancer.
ACTION REQUIRED BY:	Medical Oncologists, Surgeons, Cancer Genetics Specialists, Genetic Counsellors
REQUIRED ACTION:	1. Refer to eviQ guidelines to inform genetic testing decisions, cancer treatments and inform risk-reducing management options, including risk reducing surgery. 2. Consult with genetic counsellors and cancer genetics specialists for cancer genetic referrals, and for advice on cancer genetics testing, risk reducing options and genetic test results. 3. Refer to eviQ guidelines for referrals to cancer genetic specialists. 4. Refer to eviQ education for education on mainstreaming genetic testing for cancer affected patients. 5. Guidance from cancer genetics specialists can be obtained by contacting Familial Cancer Centres in LHDs <u>Genetic Services</u>.
DEADLINE:	N/A
We recommend you also inform:	Directors, Managers and Staff of cancer genetics, surgical and oncology services.
Website:	https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/sabs/Pages/default.aspx http://internal.health.nsw.gov.au/quality/sabs/index.html
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Situation

Cancer genetic services are increasingly utilised in the management of patients as evidence continues to evolve, helping to inform treatment and management decisions. This safety brief is a reminder to ensure that the latest evidence is used, and where appropriate, cancer genetics specialist advice is sought to inform clinical decision making for risk-reducing treatments and surgery.

Background

The cancer genetics field has evolved significantly over the past 30 years with genetic testing for the *BRCA1* and *BRCA2* genes commencing in 1996. Since then, interest and research in the cancer genetics field have continued to increase, alongside demand for cancer genetics services.

As genetic testing panels have become less expensive and more comprehensive, clinical practice patterns have changed. Evidence for, and utility of, cancer genetic testing continues to evolve, and as a result clinical advice can quickly become outdated. There is also a move to non-genetics specialists carrying out genetic testing on patients affected by cancer, requiring clinical evidence and specialist support for cancer affected people with a genetic variant.

The Cancer Institute NSW (Institute) is the cancer control agency established to lessen the impact of cancer in NSW. eviQ cancer resources are part of the Institute and are developed to support the delivery of safe, high-quality cancer care.

The eviQ cancer resources are freely available online and developed by the Institute in collaboration with multidisciplinary teams of cancer specialists and clinical genetics specialists. They are continually updated evidence-based, precise, clinician-endorsed protocols and cancer learning resources, created to improve patient outcomes and reduce treatment variation. A robust governance process for updating the guidance is in place to manage the rapidly evolving evidence.

Assessment

eviQ cancer resources are designed to support health professionals in the delivery of cancer treatments at the point of care. eviQ provides evidence-based guidelines, including genetic testing protocols for people affected by cancer, to inform cancer treatment decisions and guide surveillance and risk management interventions. eviQ guidelines also provide information for referral to genetics specialists for people with, or suspected to have, a cancer predisposition.

eviQ guidance should be used in conjunction with a health professional's clinical judgment and expertise as well as individual patient factors to determine safe and effective treatment options. There is an ongoing need for non-genetics specialists to seek advice and clinical support.

eviQ education have developed learning modules to support mainstreaming by non-genetics specialists; this is available online and free to oncology teams.

The NSW cancer genetics model of care review continues and will support optimisation of the existing workforce and creation of models that support regional LHDs with specialist advice and supervision, and clinical support for assessing and managing patients.

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Recommendations

1. That all relevant oncology and surgical specialists refer patients to cancer genetics specialists and genetic counsellors as appropriate according to eviQ referral guidelines.
2. Clinical decision making for risk reducing treatment (including risk-reducing surgery) and cancer treatment is informed by eviQ guidelines and genetics specialist advice.
3. That non-genetics specialists refer to eviQ education guidance and education modules to support mainstreaming.

Further information

<https://www.eviq.org.au/cancer-genetics>

<https://www.eviq.org.au/cancer-genetics/resources/3751-guide-for-health-professionals-ordering-genet>

<https://education.eviq.org.au/courses/mainstreaming-genetic-testing-for-oncology-teams>

<https://www.genetics.edu.au/SitePages/Genetic-Services.aspx>