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BCCGN Newsletter

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BCCGN News and Updates

Incidental Findings

Development of new genomic technologies offers the promise to identify mutations that underlie many diseases. The same tests will also likely uncover additional findings, in the same patient, on other genetic conditions that could have important medical or social implications. This additional information is known as an incidental finding and the question arises as to what we should do about this.

A [research study conducted in Austria](#) investigating the cause of a child's undiagnosed developmental delay identified a deletion of genes that were responsible for her symptoms but the researchers also found that another gene, responsible for preventing cancer, was deleted.

- What should be done with this incidental finding?
- Should the individual or family be informed?
- Should genetic counseling be offered?

Research studies investigating a particular condition usually mention in the consent forms that only incidental findings involved which directly impact the patient's care or are 'medically actionable' will be revealed to them. Other information, such as that which would indicate an increased likelihood of an adult onset disease would not be provided to the subject.

Often much of the sequencing information is not analyzed so even if there is important health related information it may not be found. Many practical and ethical issues still need to be considered in this area and discussions between patients and clinicians are key in the eventual formulation of guidelines for incidental findings.

BCCGN Activities

Preliminary Results from 2011 Physician Education Survey

Each year, BCCGN conducts a survey to keep up-to-date on the educational needs of BC's medical community. While we are still compiling information from this year's survey, we wanted to share some preliminary information with you.

Genomics Already Impacting BC Physicians. According to preliminary findings, the majority of BC physicians have had one or more patients ask about genetic/genomic testing. Over 20% of responding clinicians indicated that they had at least 1 patient use direct to consumer (DTC) testing. This was similar to the percentage of physicians sending patients for pharmacogenomics (21.5%) or micro-array (26.2%) testing. Expectations for when genomics will impact day-to-day medical practice were varied among respondents. It is clear that many physicians do not know what to expect as the integration of genomics into medical practice takes place.

Genomic Knowledge Lacking. While respondents to our survey so far believe themselves to have some awareness of basic genetic principles, they are less confident in their knowledge of more complex genomics. Furthermore, respondents doubt their ability to incorporate genomics into their practice. Most, nonetheless, feel it is important to be educated about genomics. It is findings such as these that help BCCGN identify areas of educational need among BC physicians.

Interest But No Time. For the third year in a row time is also proving to be the greatest barrier to research participation. Yet, responding physicians indicated that they are ready to expand their knowledge of genomics with the help of BCCGN. Our survey results to date show that 44% of respondents who have never been involved in clinical research in the past would be interested to do so in the future if BCCGN could provide them with some expertise and support.

CME Activities are Preferred. In order to plan effective education initiatives, we wanted to know how physicians prefer to learn. Most survey respondents are choosing CME activities as a preferred learning tool. Many respondents also accessed scientific and medical journals. Our survey also highlighted that doctors like to learn from their peers. BC Physicians have indicated they believe that UBC (72%) and BCCGN (73%) should be responsible for their education about genetics/genomics.

While these results remain preliminary, our survey is ongoing with the final analyses to be published by the end of the year.

BCCGN Events Calendar

- Nov 25, 2011:12-1pm, Delta Hospital, Rounds, Speaker: Dr. Tracy Tucker
- Dec 5, 2011: Dinner event, Ladysmith, Speaker: Dr. Michelle Steinraths
- Jan 11, 2012:1-2pm, Powell River General Hospital, Rounds, Speaker: Ruth Thomas
- Jan 31, 2012:12-1pm, Surrey Memorial Hospital, Rounds, Speakers: Dr. Colin Ross & Dr. Rod Rassekh
- Feb 24, 2012:12:30-5pm, Clinical Genomics: What You Need To Know, conference, UVic, MSB Rm 150
- Mar 2, 2012:12:30-5 pm, Medical Genetics Clinical Conference, BC Children's Hospital, Chan Auditorium
- **Apr 20, 2012:8:30-5 pm, 4th Annual BCCGN Conference, Vancouver Convention Centre.**
- May 30, 2012:8:30am-9:30, BC Children's Hospital, Pediatric Grand Rounds, Speaker: Dr. Jan Friedman
- [Check in for updates](#)

BCCGN News and Updates

New studies link bacteria to colon cancer:

On Tuesday Oct 18th CTV news featured [two new studies](#), one of which was performed by BCCGN funded researchers ([RA Moore](#), [RA Holt](#)). These studies have linked *Fusobacterium nucleatum* infection with colorectal carcinoma. Both studies found that this bacterium was much more prevalent in colorectal tumours compared to normal tissue. It remains unclear whether this change is causal or a result of the cancer.

Parents' Stress Leaves Lasting Marks on Children's Genes:

A [research team](#) has shown that parental stress during their children's early years can leave an imprint on their sons' or daughters' genes - an imprint that lasts into adolescence and may affect how these genes are expressed later in life. [The CFRI research team](#) was headed by BCCGN member, Dr. Michael Kobor.

Physician Workshop

Our second CME accredited genomics workshop for physicians in October was once again highly successful and very well received. All participants said that the practical workshop gave them a better understanding of the technologies used in clinical genomics and provided relevant sample cases. They would also unanimously recommend this program to their colleagues. If you are interested in attending the next session please [contact us](#) or [click here for more information](#).

Gene Screen BC Screening Gala

Winning films were presented on Monday Sept 26, 2011. Twenty videos were submitted to the competition this year, 19 of which made it past the first round of judging for scientific accuracy. All films can be viewed on youtube. The winning films were: 1st - "[18 Things You Should Know About Genetics](#)" by David Murawsky, 2nd - "[GENOME: The Future Is Now \(webisode 1\)](#)" by Marilyn Ness and 3rd - "[Birth](#)" by Reem Morsi and Rasha Amer. The Viewer's Choice award went to "[The Greatest Drug In The World](#)" by Rosa Bidsahari.



For more information please visit our website www.bccgn.ca