Review Examines the Pros and Cons of Surgery to Reduce the Risk of Cancer

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Genetic testing is commonplace for many inheritable cancer syndromes, and with that comes the knowledge of being a gene carrier for some patients. Many guidelines recommend that gene carriers take certain steps, such as surgery, to reduce their risk of developing cancer. A new BJS (British Journal of Surgery) review explores the quality-of-life consequences of genetic testing and risk-reducing surgery.

The review notes that risk-reducing surgery almost uniformly decreases cancer anxiety and affects patients’ quality of life, but it is irreversible and can be associated with short- and long-term side-effects.

“For some hereditary cancer syndromes, risk-reduction surgery increases life expectancy, decreases cancer anxiety, and is associated with improvements in quality of life; however, these procedures are irreversible and can be associated with marked early and late complications,” said senior author Dr. Todd Tuttle, of the University of Minnesota, in Minneapolis.

This study forms part of the BJS Special Issue on Cancer Surgery in the Genomic Era, published online in January 2018. The issue is free to access.

Additional Information


About Journal

With an impact factor of 4.839, BJS is the premier surgical journal in Europe and one of the top six surgical periodicals in the world. Its international readership is reflected in the prestigious international Editorial Board, supported by a panel of over 1200 reviewers worldwide.

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