

Cancer gene mutation crossed ethnic lines

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Scientists in California have found that a gene mutation previously linked to Jewish breast cancer patients has apparently crossed ethnic lines.

Northern California Cancer Center epidemiologist Esther M. John said that while minority women typically are not urged to receive cancer screenings, gene mutation findings clearly indicate that all women should take precautions, The Baltimore Sun reported Wednesday.

The message to doctors is that these mutations don't only occur in white women, they occur in other ethnic groups," John said.

John and her fellow scientists studied more than 3,000 women suffering from the disease, looking for any mutations of the BRCA2 cancer gene.

While the gene typically helps suppress the spread of cancer, a mutation can cause it to make an individual more susceptible to contracting the disease.

The Sun said the study's overall findings suggested that women, no matter what ethnicity they may be, should be screened to ensure they are not carriers who may pass the enhanced risk along to their daughters.

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