USPSTF: BRCA testing for women with family history

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(HealthDay)—The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommends that *BRCA1* and *BRCA2* genetic testing be limited to women whose family histories are associated with an increased likelihood of having *BRCA* mutations.

Researchers from the USPSTF reviewed the evidence to assess whether genetic counseling and testing could be effective for identifying women who are most likely to have mutations in *BRCA1* and *BRCA2* genes. Noting that current tests often yield inconclusive results, the evidence suggests that women whose family histories are not associated with an increased risk for *BTRCA1* or *BRCA2* mutations should not undergo genetic counseling or testing. Women who have family members with breast or ovarian cancer should undergo screening to identify whether

their family history is associated with having *BRCA* mutations. Women who screen positive should be offered genetic counseling and, if indicated, should receive the test after adequate consideration of the pros and cons of testing.

The draft Recommendation Statement is available for comment from April 2 to April 29, 2013.

"At this point, scientific evidence only shows that *BRCA1* and *BRCA2* testing is beneficial for women who have reviewed their family history of breast or ovarian cancer with a primary care professional and discussed the pros and cons of the screening test with a trained genetic counselor," Task Force chair Virginia Moyer, M.D., M.P.H., said in a statement. "We hope that further research into ways to use genomic science, such as identifying women who have harmful *BRCA* genes but do not have a family history of cancer, could improve screening practices and even prevent some cancers."

More information: Draft Recommendation Statement
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