

# Germline testing underused in cancer patients

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Few patients diagnosed with cancer between 2013 and 2019 in

California and Georgia underwent germline testing, according to a study published online June 5 in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* to coincide with the annual meeting of the American Society of Clinical Oncology, held from June 2 to 6 in Chicago.

Allison W. Kurian, M.D., from the Stanford University School of Medicine in California, and colleagues assessed the prevalence of germline genetic testing among 1.37 million patients (aged 20 years and older) diagnosed with cancer in California and Georgia from 2013 to 2019.

The researchers found that 6.8 percent of [cancer patients](#) underwent germline testing within two years of cancer diagnosis. There was variance by cancer type: male breast (50 percent), ovarian (38.6 percent), female breast (26 percent), multiple (7.5 percent), endometrial (6.4 percent), pancreatic (5.6 percent), colorectal (5.6 percent), prostate (1.1 percent), and lung (0.3 percent).

Patients of other races and ethnicities underwent testing less often than the 31 percent of non-Hispanic White patients with male breast cancer, female breast cancer, or [ovarian cancer](#) who underwent testing (22 percent of Asian patients, 25 percent of Black patients, and 23 percent of Hispanic [patients](#)).

"Although testing failed to meet practice guidelines, it increased substantially over time," write the authors.

Several authors disclosed financial ties to [genetic testing](#) companies.

**More information:** Allison W. Kurian et al, Germline Genetic Testing After Cancer Diagnosis, *JAMA* (2023). [DOI: 10.1001/jama.2023.9526](https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2023.9526)

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