

Genetic testing



Testing positive for any potentially life changing ailments can have a great impact on the aspects of an individual's life. For instance, testing positive will greatly impact on such an individual's ability in getting disability and life insurance, personal relationships, decisions to have children, employment among others. Genetic testing has been made possible through medical science and it should be deemed as an important advance in the field especially on potentially life changing diseases. This is because even though there are various difficulties and challenges that arise due to having more information regarding an individual's genetic makeup, the diagnosis and prediction of such diseases make health care providers and the patient to know the next step to take. For instance, the patient, having known such information, can be in a good position to choose a healthcare provider in case such a patient becomes vegetative when ill. Genetic testing for potentially life changing ailments is equally important because it enables, for instance, women having BRCA2 and BRCA1 genes to consider preventive surgery since they are at high risks for ovarian and breast cancers (Neighmond, 2012).

By testing for potentially life changing diseases, individuals like women having a history of breast cancer stand a good chance of greatly reducing chances of them getting the disease through having a double mastectomy. The risks associated with breast cancer and ovarian cancers are also greatly minimized if such women have their ovaries removed. According to researcher Timothy Rebbeck, a University of Pennsylvania epidemiologist, studies conducted indicated that indeed, the rate of risk reduction in women who had BRCA mutations and whom mastectomy was conducted on ranged from 80% to 95%.

Despite the positive sides of having genetic testing for potentially life changing ailments, such risks are never completely brought down to zero since some of the tissues are never taken out completely thus rendering such individuals to become at risk once more. For instance, surgical means can never completely remove breast tissue since it is present throughout the whole torso. The same applies to ovarian cancer.

There are many compelling risks and benefits which are associated with genetic testing. In case breast or testicular cancer was prevalent in my family, I would prefer to find out if I carried the mutated gene because this would enable me to make important decisions regarding my health and life in general. Knowing whether I possess the gene would enable me to know if there are any remedial or corrective medical actions that can be taken to enhance or prolong my lifespan. On the other hand, not knowing whether I possessed the mutated gene will make me be subjected towards the effects of such disease without my knowledge. It will be very late by the time healthcare providers realize that I have the mutated genes and thus any health measures taken to improve my condition may be rendered useless. Finding out if I carried the mutated gene is vital because it will enable me to eliminate some specific lethal mutations which are unwanted from my future descendants (Klitzman, 2012).

On the other hand, knowing whether I carried the mutated genes or not shall be beneficial since unlike preferring to live with the uncertainty of not knowing, it will be better. This is because it will also check my recessive and dominant genes in order to ascertain whether I carry any disorders which may eventually be passed on to my children without me showing any

symptoms. Given the fact that having a mutation doesn't necessarily imply that I will get the disease, having the genetic test and discovering that it is positive will be beneficial in that it will only imply that I stood a higher risk as compared to the general public basing on my genetics. I can therefore take various steps in order to reduce the risks of the diseases since most disorders are known to be a combination of both environmental and genetic factors.

Karen and her family in Decoding Destiny story changed my feelings regarding genetic testing and increased surveillance versus preventive surgery because Jerome discusses a specific type of genetic testing used on patients in order to ascertain their susceptibility towards diseases. BRCA testing, according to Jerome, deciphers the code of DNA of all human beings and eventually uses the information in understanding how each of the genes contributes to disease or health. The notion embodied by Groopman is that human beings are preoccupied in exploring the unknown and thus have a feeling that they need to be in a constant state of awareness for the future so as to acquire beneficial changes for themselves. Groopman even goes further to the extent of showing how BRCA testing can greatly help one of his own parents to discover whether or not the mother was destined for cancer. Jerome's story changed my feelings in that I was able to know that individuals who opt to prolong death through condemning the advances in DNR are only attempting to hang on the perception that an individual's future as well his or her destiny can be altered and possibly be controlled.

Through the story of Karen and her family, it can be well ascertained that indeed, it is the fear of death which drives many individuals to persist in

prolonging their lives as well as their beloved ones' lives. It is also through the story can be realized how humans are always faced with fixed limits when attempting to learn secrets of life and how they are sustained by a strong belief that indeed they can greatly enhance and mould their future. It is also through the article that it can be seen how postponing of life can provide temporary hope for those who are affected by a terminal illness to a loved one and the incapability of placing a time frame on the existence of an individual (Groopman, 2012).