

A Personalized Approach To Treating Breast Cancer

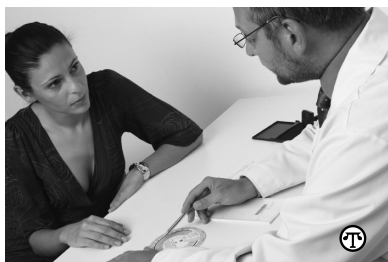
(NAPSA)—Diagnostic testing to determine the use of targeted therapy is a valuable tool in helping physicians guide treatment options for patients, particularly women who have been diagnosed with breast cancer. These diagnostic tests are designed to analyze the unique biology of a patient's breast cancer to help doctors customize therapy. The goal is to maximize the effectiveness of appropriate drug treatments and to minimize their side effects. This "personalized" approach to testing is the future of medicine.

Breast cancer tumors that are positive for certain hormone receptors may benefit from hormonal therapy. HER2 status can tell how aggressive a breast cancer may be. HER2 genes are contained in the DNA of all normal breast cells and help breast cells grow. About 20 percent of breast cancers contain an abnormal number of HER2 genes or high concentration of HER2 protein in the cells. An abnormal amount or high concentration of HER2 is associated with cancer that is aggressive and therefore requires special treatment.

Breast tissue can be tested for the presence of this protein or gene and routine testing is recommended for most women with breast cancer because the results may affect treatment recommendations and decisions. The HER2 test can determine if a patient has an abnormally high number of HER2 genes or proteins in the tumor tissue which would in turn support targeted treatment with the drugs which target HER2.

New Testing Guidelines

The American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) and the College of American Pathologists



Many believe the "personalized" approach to cancer testing is the future of medicine.

(CAP) issued new HER2 testing practice guidelines earlier this year to help physicians have more accurate measurements of HER2 in breast cancer. In releasing the new guidelines, ASCO and CAP announced that approximately 20 percent of current HER2 testing may be inaccurate. Now it is recommended that laboratories that perform HER2 testing be accredited to do this very important test.

Given the importance of accurate testing, Dr. Bruce Horten, a national medical director for Genzyme Genetics, encourages women to talk to their doctors and request that their HER2 tests be sent to a laboratory that meets the ASCO and CAP HER2 testing practice guidelines.

Genzyme Genetics, based in Westborough, Mass., with laboratory facilities across the U.S., is one of the first laboratories to implement these guidelines for HER2 breast cancer testing. Genzyme Genetics is a national leader in high-quality breast cancer predictive and prognostic analysis and receives nearly 20 percent of all newly diagnosed breast cancer cases in the U.S. for ancillary testing, including HER2 analysis.

To learn more, visit www.genzyme.com.