Management of early breast cancer in patients with germline BRCA mutations

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There is an increased understanding of the importance of understanding the drivers of each individual cancer. As well as somatic mutations, there is an increased awareness of germline mutations in breast cancer and the specific aspects that are associated with hereditary cancers. Testing for germline mutations and in particular, has impact on cancer development risk and now also helps health care providers to make a tailored plan on management for patients including surgical management and pharmacotherapy.

The recent data from the OlympiA Trial has shown the efficacy of Olaparib in early breast cancer in improving progression free survival in persons with germline BRCA1 and BRCA2 mutations. Neoadjuvant studies of olaparib and other PARP inhibitors have shown exciting response rates. But questions remain about how to incorporate these new findings into our current regimen, which patients are suitable for treatment, how to efficiently test patients and what other treatments are important including platinum agents.

Early detection of gene hereditary cancers to define the high risk group of HER2 negative patients is important and an area that we are learning more about as we explore both BRCA mutations and other germline mutations. These issues will be discussed along with patient related issues about hereditary breast cancer.