

Genetic Counselling and Its Importance in the Field

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Genetic counselling is the process of guiding to the individuals and families who are affected by or at risk of genetic disorders in order to help them to understand and adapt the medical, familial and psychological consequences of genetic contributions to the disease; this field is considered necessary for the implementation of genomic medicine [1]. This process integrates:

- Interpretation of family history and medical history to assess the disease occurrence or recurrence.
- Education around inheritance, testing, prevention, resources and its management.
- To promote the counselling which is informed by choices, adaptation to the risk or condition and support in reaching out the relatives which is also at risk?

Approaches of Counselling

There are several different approaches for genetic counselling. The reciprocal-engagement model of genetic counselling practice includes goals, strategies, tenets, and behaviours for addressing the individuals' genetic concerns. Few counsellors have a favour of psycho-educational approach while other counsellors incorporate more techniques in psycho-therapy. Genetic counselling is a psycho-educational individuals' "learn genetics contribution of their health risks and process what this means and how it feels".

Whether the process of genetic counselling is a form of psychotherapy is a debate. The relationship between the individual and counsellor is similar as the goals of the sessions. As a psychotherapist, it aims to help the individuals' to improve their wellbeing, a genetic counsellor also help the client to address a "situational health threat that similarly threatens client wellbeing". Due to the lack of studies, it is hard to say with certainty whether genetic counselling can be "conceptualized as a short-term, applied, specific type of psychotherapy" which compares the genetic counselling to the practice of psychotherapy. Nevertheless, there some existing studies suggesting that genetic counselling falls "significantly short of psychotherapeutic counselling" because genetic counselling sessions mainly consists of the distribution of information without much emphasis placed on explaining any long-term impacts to the client [2].

Hereditary Cancer Genetics

Cancer genetic counsellors see individuals with a personal diagnosis and/or family history of cancer or symptoms of an inherited cancer syndrome. Genetic counsellors will take a family history and assess the

hereditary risk, or risk that can be passed from one generation to another generation. If it is indicated, they can coordinate with the genetic testing, typically through blood sample or saliva sample, to assess the hereditary risk for cancer. Personalized medical management and cancer screening recommendations are provided which is based on the results of genetic testing and/or the family history of cancer. While most of the cancers are not inherited (sporadic), few are likely to have a hereditary factor, particularly when it occurs at very young ages or when clustering in families.

Disparities of Health

In genetic counselling the outreach efforts are needed intentionally to extend the opportunities to populations that have been historically understated in the profession to create a more dissimilar and comprehensive workforce and access to services. Given the history of low engagement of under-represented minority populations in both genetic research and clinical genetic services, these two aspects are challenging and must be addressed before the benefits of precision medicine will be fully realized [3].

References

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