# Increasing rates of germline genetic testing in Veterans with breast cancer

Kriti Gera[1], Sita Bhushan[2,3,4], Sarah Colonna[3,5,6], Shruti Trehan[1,3], Sarah Collins[3,7], Haley Moss[3,7,8], Chad Hirsch[3], Akiko Chiba[3, 7, 9]

1. James A. Haley VA, Tampa FL 2. Michael E DeBakey VA, Houston TX 3.National Oncology Program, 4. Baylor University 5. Medical Oncology, Huntsman Cancer Institute 6. George E Whalen VA, Salt Lake City, UT, 7. Durham VAMC, Durham NC, 8. Gynecologic Oncology, Duke University, 9. Surgical oncology, Duke University

## Introduction

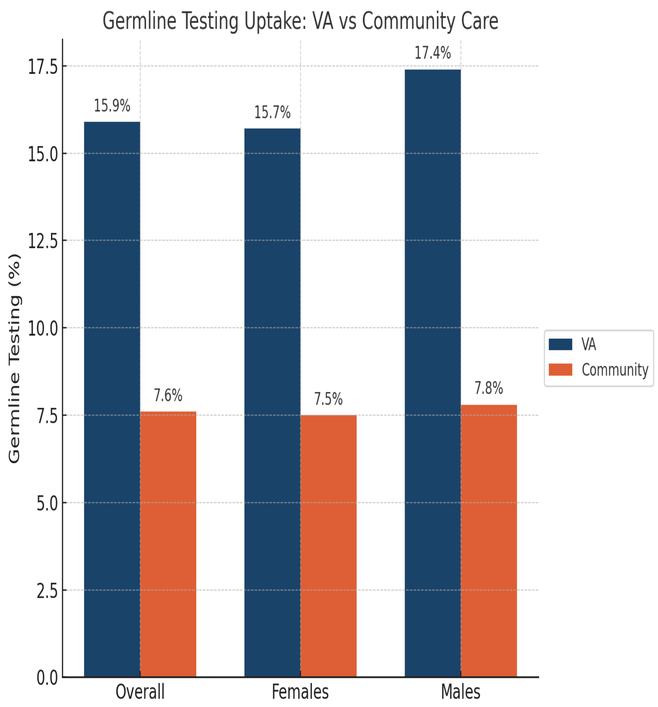
- Despite increasing guideline support for germline testing in breast cancer—including universal testing recommendations from the American Society of Breast Surgeons and expanded criteria from NCCN and ASCO—uptake remains low, particularly among minority and male patients.
- The Veterans Health Administration (VA) Breast and Gynecology Oncology System of Excellence (BGSoE) established in 2022, provides sub-specialized, evidence-based, comprehensive breast cancer care to Veterans throughout the United States including rural and ethnic minorities.
- BGSoE is responsible for developing and updating the VA Breast cancer pathway, which supports universal genetic testing among patients with breast cancer. BGSoE utilizes Point of Care (POC) genetic testing and refers patients to the Comprehensive Genetic Service (CGS) for post test counseling when needed.
- Veterans with breast cancer may undergo genetic testing through BGSoE and CGS or local community care providers.

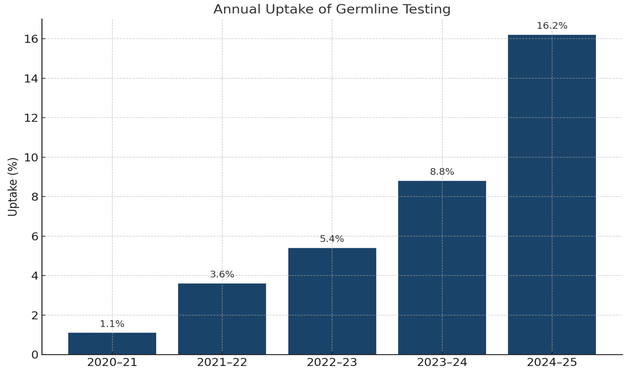
## Methods and Materials

- This is a retrospective cohort analysis of breast cancer patients recorded in the VA national breast cancer dashboard from May 2020 to May 2025.
- We performed descriptive analysis to assess rates of germline and somatic testing by treatment setting (VA, including BGSoE vs. community care), sex, ethnicity, and year of diagnosis.

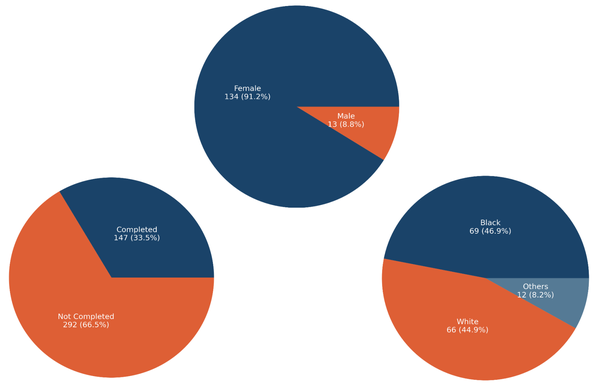
## Results

- Total breast cancer patients: 13,819
  - 12,218 (88.4%) female
  - 1601 (11.6%) male
- Germline testing performed: 1475 (**10.7%**)
- Somatic testing: 713 (**5.2%**)




## BGSoE Veterans Analysis




- 61% tests were POC assays
- 15% patients tested were rural.

Table 1: Yearly distribution of genetic testing

| Year | Results by Year | Unique Patients |
|---|---|---|
| 2021 | 3 | 3 |
| 2022 | 18 | 16 |
| 2023 | 34 | 31 |
| 2024 | 92 | 77 |
| 2025 | 22 | 20 |
| **Grand Total** | **169** | **147** |

## Conclusions

- Annual uptake of genetic testing among Veterans has steadily increased.
- Testing remains highest among Veterans managed through BGSoE and lowest among those treated in community care settings.
- Despite national guideline recommendations, overall genetic testing rates in the VA remain low.
- Males and Veterans receiving care in the community remain significantly under-tested.
- POC assays have been particularly impactful for minority and rural Veterans, patient groups that historically encounter racial and geographic barriers to genetic testing.
- These findings support BGSoE's ongoing efforts to standardize and expand comprehensive breast cancer genetic services across the VA system, ensuring equitable care delivery.

Contact :
Akiko Chiba, MD, FACS
Surgical Oncology, Duke University, Durham, NC
Durham VAMC, Durham NC
Akiko.Chiba@va.gov

The views expressed in this study do not represent the view of the Department of Veterans Affairs or the United States Government

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