

What is Genetic Counseling? [1]

Submitted by Conrad Charles on Wednesday, Mar 12th, 2014



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By definition, **genetic counselling** is the counselling and study of individuals with pre-existing, current or potential disorders and diseases inherited from their genetics. Once results have been established, they are collected and communicated to the patient. The patient will now be able to make better health choices that can positively affect the inheritance pattern for future offspring. The success of genetic counselling in finding the inherent patterns is early diagnosis.*

1. What is a Genetic counselor and what can they do to help?

A genetic counselor is a professional that has studied genetic diseases and how those diseases run in different families. Genetic counselors will assess what the disease does to affect the genetics of the individual in the family. They will ascertain what risks and potential dangers are involved as well as advise the client on options and what courses of action to take. These professionals can work in clinical, research and teaching settings.

Clinical Genetic Counselor

Genetic counselors who work in a clinical setting provide genetic counselling in the form of empowering patients with critical and useful information. This information can be subjected on genetic conditions and birth defect, based on information given to them by the patient and their family. The genetic counselor will discuss the information pertaining to specific disorders and what the disorders inherent patterns are. They will then review the individual's lifestyle and analyze the risk of the disease or disorder being passed on in the family. Clinical genetic counselors also provide support to individuals and families, that will have to adapt, change or cope with the current findings. Common clinical settings for genetic counseling are:

- Pediatric

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- Cancer clinics
 - Prenatal

Genetic Counselor in Diagnostics

These are genetic counselors that work in a research setting. They use genetic counselling to how disorders and diseases are inherited in certain families. These disorders and disease are discovered with the aid of diagnostic research. Once the disorder or disease is discovered the genetic counselor will evaluate a form of treatment for them. Common diagnostic settings for genetic counseling are:

- Laboratories
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- Pharmaceutical companies specializing in Pharmacogenomics

Genetic Counselor as Educators

Many genetic counselors have been involved in teaching roles. This can be at an education level by educating medical students pursuing the same career path, in a public forum with another physician, and healthcare providers discussing genetic counselling. Common educational settings for genetic counseling are:

- Medical facilities such as hospitals and clinics
- Nursing schools
- Department of Health is educating health care professionals and staff.

Genetic counselors across the board have several tasks on the job that may include:

- Developing and improving genetics tests
- Collect and examine family history to search for patterns of inherent disease in individuals.
- Educate in forums and classroom settings about how traits are inherited
- Deliberate with other health professionals in the same industry in order to assess which form of treatment will best suit a patient suffering from a genetic disorder.

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References:

<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/genetic+counseling> [2]

http://www.genetichhealth.com/Resources_What_Is_Genetic_Counseling.shtml#Anchor1 [3]

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