

### **When Patients know their own minds**

Genes are a disposition not a determinant. It is not surprising that many women with genes that increase their risk of breast and ovarian cancer are failing to have life-changing interventions such as a mastectomy, surgery to remove their ovaries or taking medication with serious adverse effects (“Warning to women at cancer risk” 18<sup>th</sup> November 2013).

Although patient-centred care is the new buzzword, patients are still expected to follow their doctor’s advice. Those who don’t are non-compliant. They are either ill informed or have irrational beliefs that contradict scientific evidence.

We need to recognise that people who do not follow a doctor’s advice are often making rational decisions about the way in which treatments impact on their lives. Although doctors have expertise in medical treatments, people are experts about their own lives. Rather than try to change our minds with more and more information, perhaps doctors should gracefully accept a patients’ choice.

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