

# Hereditary Breast Cancer: A Brief Overview

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## Abstract

**Introduction:** Breast cancer, one of the most common and serious malignancies affecting women, occurs in sporadic and hereditary forms. The recent identification of breast cancer predisposing genes involved in the aetiology of breast cancer has provided us with new insights into this field. **Methods:** In order to understand the molecular basis of familial breast cancer, English literature identified through Medline between 1995 and February 2000 were reviewed using the search terms: breast cancer, genetics, hereditary, BRCA1 and BRCA2, amongst others. **Results:** In this brief overview, some of the advances in the aetiology of breast cancer will be highlighted. This overview is divided into the following categories: cancer genes, inherited genetic predisposition to breast cancer, BRCA1 and BRCA2.

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**Key words:** BRCA1, BRCA2, Genes

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