

## **Experiences and prospects of genetic medicine: BRCA testing in the US, UK and the Netherlands**

Workshop organized by the *Centre for Society and Genomics* and the *Cancer Genomics Centre*.

Date: Monday 24 April, 13.00 – 17.00

Location: Hubrecht Laboratory, Uppsalalaan 8, De Uithof, Utrecht (How to get there? Go to <http://www.niob.knaw.nl/> )

In this workshop Shobita Parthasarathy (Ford School of Public Policy, University of Michigan) has been invited to present her comparative and comprehensive analysis of the recent histories of BRCA testing in the US and UK. In addition to her presentation two other speakers will contribute to the programme of this workshop. Hanne Meijers (Erasmus Medical Centre Rotterdam) will discuss the organization and development of BRCA testing in the Netherlands. Marianne Boenink (Faculty of Behavioural Sciences, University of Twente) will present results from her study of experiences of (Dutch) women applying for a BRCA test.

### Programme

13.00: Coffee/tea

13.15: Welcome and introduction: Dirk Stemerding (CSG, University of Twente)

13.30: Technology counts: building “best practices” for the future of genetic medicine, prof. dr Shobita Parthasarathy (University of Michigan)

14.15: Discussion

14.45: Break

15.00: Practices of BRCA testing in the Netherlands: past experiences and future expectations, dr Hanne Meijers (Erasmus Medical Centre Rotterdam)

15.30: Difficult choices or heavy responsibilities? Experiences of Dutch women with predictive BRCA testing, dr Marianne Boenink (Department of Philosophy, University of Twente)

16.00: Discussion

16.30: Drinks

Participants in the workshop will include researchers involved in the Centre for Society and Genomics, the Cancer Genomics Centre, and researchers attending the international Genomics and Society Conference in Amsterdam.

To register, please send a notice by email to Cristina Arpesella of the Cancer Genomics Centre ([M.C.Arpesella@med.uu.nl](mailto:M.C.Arpesella@med.uu.nl), tel ++ 31 30 2538988) before April 19 stating your full name and affiliation.

For additional information, contact:

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Examining the history of BRCA testing in the context of two different health care systems, Shobita Parthasarathy has developed a highly original and informative analysis of an emerging and much debated practice of genetic testing, and its broader implications for the politics of health care. In her book *Building Genetic Medicine: Technology, Disease, and the National Politics of Health Care* (to be published by MIT press in 2007) she develops three arguments. First, she demonstrates that national context plays a very important role in the ways practices of BRCA testing have been built. In the United States, BRCA testing has been built as a commercial laboratory technology that is available on demand, while in Britain, it is a clinical service offered by the government's National Health Service only to those deemed to be at "high risk". Second, she complicates in her book common visions of our genetic future, by showing that because genetic medicine is being built quite differently in different national contexts, it has rather different national consequences for our health care and lives. Finally, she argues that by understanding how national differences are playing an important role in the development of genomic medicine, we may be able to better understand how to engage in transnational scientific cooperation and technology transfer, and better anticipate the challenges to globalization that are beginning to occur across the world.

By adding two different accounts of developments and experiences in the field of BRCA testing in the Dutch national context, we want to stimulate further discussion in this workshop about the relevance and implications of Parthasarathy's analysis for (1) the Dutch practice of BRCA testing and its future development, and (2) future policies of genetic testing and public health.