



UF Health is working with Invitae, a genetics information company that provides testing.

Trying on Genes

UF Health wants to make genetic screening routine.

UF Health is piloting a program to offer genetic screening for breast cancer to all gynecology patients as part of their annual exams.

Based on recommendations from the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, the program was conceived by Dr. Sonja A. Rasmussen, a clinical geneticist and director of UF's Precision Health Program, which integrates genomics into clinical care.

To lead the pilot, Rasmussen enlisted the help of Dr. Shireen Madini Sims, associate professor in the UF College of Medicine's department of obstetrics and gynecology.

For almost a year, Sims has been the only physician at UF Health to offer genetic screening for breast cancer as well as ovarian cancer in routine care. The screenings are provided in partnership with Invitae, a genetics information company that provides testing. Sims talked with FLORIDA TREND about the program:

► **The process:** "Patients fill out an online survey and answer questions about their personal family medical history. The system uses the information to assess their risks and need for genetic testing."

► **Significance:** "First, we can determine if they meet the National Comprehensive Cancer Network criteria to do genetic

testing. The second thing ... it tells if the patient meets the criteria for modified breast imaging as a screening. Some women have risks high enough that they should do MRIs every year in addition to mammograms. The third thing is it calculates the Tyrer-Cuzick score for each patient. That is the score that estimates a patient's lifetime risk of breast cancer. Anything higher than 20% is considered elevated. Some of those patients will meet the criteria to take medicines to reduce their lifetime risk of breast cancer, so we have a lot of opportunity to intervene."

► **Use:** "It's still not very widespread. We're trying to work out the kinks and figure out how best to get this done, but, certainly, we're hoping this will broaden out to the medical community as a standard practice."

► **Discoveries:** "The patients are really, really appreciative. I think patients want to feel they have some ownership of their health care, but what I hear over and over is, 'I have a daughter. I have sisters. I have grandkids. I want to have this information in case it's important for them.'" — By Laura Hampton



"I learned a lot of new material, but it wasn't a huge leap as an OB/GYN to have to talk about genetics. We have to talk about genetic screening with all of our pregnant ladies."

— Dr. Shireen Madini Sims,
associate professor, UF College
of Medicine department of
obstetrics and gynecology