Method for diagnosing a predisposition for breast and ovarian cancer

The present invention relates generally to the field of human genetics. Specifically, the present invention relates to methods and materials used to isolate and detect a human breast and ovarian cancer predisposing gene (BRCA1), some mutant alleles of which cause susceptibility to cancer, in particular breast and ovarian cancer. More specifically, the invention relates to germline mutations in the BRCA1 gene and their use in the diagnosis of predisposition to breast and ovarian cancer. The present invention further relates to somatic mutations in the BRCA1 gene in human breast and ovarian cancer and their use in the diagnosis and prognosis of human breast and ovarian cancer. Additionally, the invention relates to somatic mutations in the BRCA1 gene in other human cancers and their use in the diagnosis and prognosis of human cancers.
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The publications and other materials used herein to illuminate the background of the invention, and in particular, cases to provide additional data respecting the practice, are incorporated herein by reference, and for convenience, are referenced by author and date in the following text and respectively grouped in the appended list of References.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The genetics of cancer is complicated, involving multiple dominant, positive regulators of the transformed state (oncogenes) as well as multiple recessive, negative regulators (tumor suppressor genes). Over a hundred oncogenes have been characterized. Fewer than a dozen tumor suppressor genes have been identified, but the number is expected to increase beyond fifty (Kudson, 1993). The involvement of so many genes underscores the complexity of the growth control mechanisms that operate in cells to maintain the integrity of normal tissue. This complexity is manifest in another way. So far, no single gene has been shown to participate in the development of all, or even the majority of human cancers. The most common oncogenic mutations are in the T-1F gene, found in 10-15% of all solid tumors (Anderson et al., 1992). The most frequently mutated tumor suppressor genes are in the T-P53 gene, homozgyously deleted in roughly 50% of all tumors, and CDKN2, which was homozgyously deleted in 45% of tumor cell lines examined (Kam et al., 1984). Without a target that is common to all transformed cells, the dream of a "magic bullet" that can destroy or reverse cancer cells while leaving normal tissue unharmed is improbable. The hope for a new generation of specifically targeted antitumor drugs may rest on the ability to identify tumor suppressor genes or oncogenes that play general roles in control of cell division.

The tumor suppressor genes which have been cloned and characterized influence susceptibility to: 1) Retinoblastoma (RB1); 2) Wilms' tumor (WT1); 3) Li-Fraumeni (TP53); 4) Familial adenomatous polyposis (APC); 5) Neurofibromatosis type 1 (NF1); 6) Neurofibromatosis type 2 (NF2); 7) von Hippel-Lindau syndrome (VHL); 8) Multiple endocrine neoplasia type 2A (MEN2A); and 9) Melanoma (CDKN2).

Tumor suppressor loci that have been mapped genetically but not yet isolated include genes for: Multiple endocrine neoplasia type 1 (MEN1); Lynch cancer family syndrome 2 (LCFS2); Neurofibromatosis (NB); basal cell nevus syndrome (BCNS); Beckwith-Wiedemann syndrome (BWS); Fanconi anemia (FAN); Tuberous sclerosis 1 (TSC1); and Tuberous sclerosis 2 (TSC2). The tumor suppressor genes that have been characterized to date encode proteins with similarities to a variety of protein types, including DNA binding proteins (WT1), transcriptional regulators (RB1), GTPase activating proteins or GAPs (NF1), cytoskeletal components (NF2), membrane bound receptor kinases (VHL), and cyclin-dependent kinases (CDKN2) and others with no obvious similarity to known proteins (APC and VHL).

In many cases, the tumor suppressor gene originally identified through genetic studies has been shown to be lost or mutated in some sporadic tumors. This result suggests that regions of chromosome aberration may signify the position of important tumor suppressor genes involved both in genetic predisposition to cancer and in sporadic cancer.

One of the hallmarks of several tumor suppressor genes characterized to date is that they are deleted at high frequency in certain tumor types. The deletions often involve loss of a single allele, a so-called loss of heterozygosity (LOH), but may also involve homozygous deletion of both alleles. For LOH, the remaining allele is presumed to be nonfunctional, either because of a preexisting inherited mutation, or because of a secondary sporadic mutation.

Breast cancer is one of the most significant diseases that affects women. At the current rate, American women have a 1 in 8 risk of developing breast cancer by age 95 (American Cancer Society, 1992). Treatment of breast cancer at later stages is often futile and disfiguring, making early detection a high priority in medical management of the disease. Ovarian cancer, although less frequent than breast cancer, is often rapidly fatal and is the fourth most common cause of cancer mortality in American women. Genetic factors contribute to an ill-defined proportion of breast cancer incidence, estimated to be about 5% of all cases but approximately 25% of cases diagnosed before age 40 (Claus et al., 1991). Breast cancer has been subdivided into two types, early-onset and late-onset, based on an inflection in the age-specific incidence curve at around age 50. Mutation of one gene, BRCA1, is thought to account for approximately...
45% of familial breast cancer, but at least 80% of families with both breast and ovarian cancer (Easton et al., 1992).

Intense efforts to isolate the BRCA1 gene have proceeded since it was first mapped in 1990 (Hall et al., 1990; Narod et al., 1991). A second locus, BRCA2, has recently been mapped to chromosome 13q (Wooster et al., 1994) and appears to account for a proportion of early-onset breast cancer roughly equal to BRCA1, but contains a lower risk of ovarian cancer. The remaining susceptibility to early-onset breast cancer is divided between at least one unlinked gene for familial cancer, and rarer germ-line mutations in genes such as TP53 (Malin et al., 1990). It has also been suggested that heterozygote carriers for defective forms of the Ataxia-Telangiectasia gene are at higher risk for breast cancer (Swift et al., 1976; Swift et al., 1981). Late-onset breast cancer is also often familial although the risks in relatives are not as high as those for early-onset breast cancer (Cannon-Albright et al., 1994; Mettlin et al., 1990). However, the percentage of such cases due to genetic susceptibility is unknown.

Breast cancer has long been recognized to be, in part, a familial disease (Anderson, 1972). Numerous investigators have examined the evidence for genetic inheritance and concluded that the data are most consistent with dominant inheritance for a major susceptibility locus or loci (Bishop and Gardner, 1980; Go et al., 1985; Williams and Anderson, 1984; Bishop et al., 1988; Newman et al., 1990; Claus et al., 1991). Recent results demonstrate that at least three loci exist which convey susceptibility to breast cancer as well as other cancers. These loci are the TP53 locus on chromosome 17p (Malin et al., 1990), a 17q-linked susceptibility locus known as BRCA1 (Hall et al., 1990), and one or more loci responsible for the unmapped residual. Hall et al. (1990) indicated that the inherited breast cancer susceptibility in kindreds with early age onset is linked to chromosome 17q21; although subsequent studies by this group using a more appropriate genetic model partially refuted the limitation to early-onset breast cancer (Margulies et al., 1992).

Most strategies for cloning the 17q-linked breast cancer predisposing gene (BRCA1) require precise genetic localization studies. The simplest model for the functional role of BRCA1 holds that alleles of BRCA1 that predispose to cancer are recessive to wild type alleles, that is, cells that contain at least one wild type BRCA1 allele are not cancerous. However, cells that contain only one wild type BRCA1 allele and one predisposing allele may occasionally suffer loss of the wild type allele either by random mutation or by chromosome loss during cell division (nondisjunction). All the progeny of such a mutant cell lack the wild type function of BRCA1 and may develop into tumors. According to this model, predisposing alleles of BRCA1 are recessive, yet susceptibility to cancer is inherited in a dominant fashion; women who possess one predisposing allele (and one wild type allele) risk developing cancer, because their mammary epithelial cells may spontaneously lose the wild type BRCA1 allele. This model applied to a group of cancer susceptibility loci known as tumor suppressors or antioncogenes, a class of genes that includes the retinoblastoma gene and neurofibromatosis gene. By inference this model may also explain the BRCA1 function, as has recently been suggested (Smith et al., 1992).

A second possibility is that BRCA1 predisposing alleles are truly dominant; that is, a wild type allele of BRCA1 cannot overcome the tumor forming allele of the predisposing allele. Thus, a cell that carries both wild type and mutant alleles would not necessarily lose the wild type copy of BRCA1 before giving rise to malignant cells. Instead, mammary cells in predisposed individuals would undergo some other stochastic change(s) leading to cancer.

If BRCA1 predisposing alleles are recessive, the BRCA1 gene is expected to be expressed in normal mammary tissue but not functionally expressed in mammary tumors. In contrast, if BRCA1 predisposing alleles are dominant, the wild type BRCA1 gene may or may not be expressed in normal mammary tissue. However, the predisposing allele will likely be expressed in breast tumor cells.

The 17q linkage of BRCA1 was independently confirmed in three of five kindreds with both breast and ovarian cancer (Narod et al., 1991). These studies claimed to localize the gene within a very large region, 15 centimorgans (cM), or approximately 15 million base pairs, to either side of the linked marker pCM66 (17757). However, attempts to clone the region further by genetic studies, using markers surrounding pCM66, proved unsuccessful. Subsequent studies indicated that the gene was considerably more proximal (Easton et al., 1993) and that the original analysis was flawed (Margulies et al., 1992). Hall et al. (1992) recently localized the BRCA1 gene to an approximately 8 cM interval (approximately 8 million base pairs) bounded by Mfd15(D17S250) on the proximal side and the human GIP gene on the distal side. A slightly narrower interval for the BRCA1 locus, based on publicly available data, was agreed upon at the Chromosome 17 workshop in March of 1992 (Fain, 1992). The size of these regions and the uncertainty associated with them has made it exceedingly difficult to design and implement physical mapping and/or cloning strategies for isolating the BRCA1 gene.

Identification of a breast cancer susceptibility locus would permit the early detection of susceptibility individuals and greatly increase our ability to understand the initial steps which lead to cancer. As susceptibility loci are often altered during tumor progression, cloning these genes could also be important in the development of better diagnostic and prognostic products, as well as better cancer therapies.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates generally to the field of human genetics. Specifically, the present invention relates to
methods and materials used to isolate and detect a human breast cancer predisposing gene (BRCA1), some alleles of which cause susceptibility to cancer, in particular breast and ovarian cancer. More specifically, the present invention relates to germline mutations in the BRCA1 gene and their use in the diagnosis of predisposition to breast and ovarian cancer. The invention further relates to somatic mutations in the BRCA1 gene in human breast cancer and their use in the diagnosis and prognosis of human breast and ovarian cancer. Additionally, the invention relates to somatic mutations in the BRCA1 gene in other human cancers and their use in the diagnosis and prognosis of human cancers. The invention also relates to the therapy of human cancers which have a mutation in the BRCA1 gene, including gene therapy, protein replacement therapy and protein mimetics. The invention further relates to the screening of drugs for cancer therapy. Finally, the invention relates to the screening of the BRCA1 gene for mutations, which are useful for diagnosing the predisposition to breast and ovarian cancer.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 is a diagram showing the order of loci neighboring BRCA1 as determined by the chromosome 17 workshop.

Figure 1 is reproduced from Finin, 1992.

Figure 2 is a schematic map of YACs which define part of M1d15-M1d19B region.

Figure 3 is a schematic map of STSs, P1s and BACs in the BRCA1 region.

Figure 4 is a schematic map of human chromosome 17. The pertinent region containing BRCA1 is expanded to indicate the relative positions of two previously identified genes, CA125 and RNU2. BRCA1 spans the marker D17S55.

Figure 5 shows alignment of the BRCA1 zinc-finger domain with 3 other zinc-finger domains that scored highest in a Smith-Waterman alignment. RP61 encodes a protein that appears to be a negative regulator of the IL-2 receptor in mouse. RIN1 encodes a DNA-binding protein that includes a RING-finger motif related to the zinc-finger. RP61 encodes a putative transcription factor that is the N-terminal domain of the RET oncogene product. Bottom line contains the C8HC4 consensus zinc-finger sequence showing the positions of cysteines and one histidine that form the zinc ion binding pocket.

Figure 6 is a diagram of BRCA1 mRNA showing the locations of introns and the variants of BRCA1 mRNA produced by alternative splicing. Intron locations are shown by dark triangles and the exons are numbered below the line representing the cDNA. The top cDNA is the composite used to generate the peptide sequence of BRCA1. Alternative forms identified as cDNA clones or hybrid selection clones are shown below.

Figure 7 shows the tissue expression pattern of BRCA1. The blot was obtained from Clontech and contains RNA from the indicated tissues. Hybridization conditions were as recommended by the manufacturer using a probe consisting of nucleotide positions 3931 to 3932 of BRCA1. Note that both breast and ovarian are heterogeneous tissues and the percentage of relevant epithelial cells can be variable. Molecular weight standards are in kilobases.

Figure 8 is a diagram of the 5' untranslated region plus the beginning of the translated region of BRCA1 showing the locations of introns and the variants of BRCA1 mRNA produced by alternative splicing. Intron locations are shown by broken dashed lines. Six alternate splice forms are shown.

Figure 9A shows a nonsense mutation in Kindred 2082. P indicates the person originally screened, b and c are haplotype carriers, a, d, e, f, and g do not carry the BRCA1 haplotype. The C to T mutation results in a stop codon and creates a site for the restriction enzyme Avel. PCR amplification products are cut with this enzyme. The carriers are heterozygous for the site and therefore show three bands. Non-carriers remain uncut.

Figure 9B shows a mutation and cosegregation analysis in BRCA1 kindreds. Carrier individuals are represented as filled circles and squares in the pedigree diagrams. Frameshift mutation in Kindred 1910. The first three lanes are control, noncarrier samples. Lanes labeled 1-3 contain sequences from carrier individuals. Lane 4 contains DNA from a kindred member who does not carry the BRCA1 mutation. The diamond is used to prevent identification of the kindred. The frameshift resulting from the additional C is apparent in lanes labeled 1, 2, and 3.

Figure 9C shows a mutation and cosegregation analysis in BRCA1 kindreds. Carrier individuals are represented as filled circles and squares in the pedigree diagrams. Inferred regulatory mutation in Kindred 2035. ASO analysis of carriers and noncarriers of 2 different polymorphisms (PM1 and PM7) which were examined for heterozygosity in the germline and compared to the heterozygosity of lymphocyte mRNA. The top 2 rows of each panel contain PCR products amplified from genomic DNA and the bottom 2 rows contain PCR products amplified from cDNA. "A" and "G" are the two alleles detected by the ASO. The dark spots indicate that a particular allele is present in the sample. The first three lanes of PM7 represent the three genotypes in the general population.

Figures 10A-10H show genomic sequence of BRCA1. The lower case letters denote intron sequence while the upper case letters denote exon sequence. Indefinite intervals within introns are designated with vvvvvvvvvvvv. Known polymorphic sites are shown as underlined and boldface type.
DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates generally to the field of human genetics. Specifically, the present invention relates to methods and materials used to isolate and detect a human breast cancer predisposing gene (BRCA1), some alleles of which cause susceptibility to cancer, in particular breast and ovarian cancer. More specifically, the present invention relates to germline mutations in the BRCA1 gene and their use in the diagnosis of predisposition to breast and ovarian cancer. The invention further relates to somatic mutations in the BRCA1 gene in human breast cancer and their use in the diagnosis and prognosis of human breast and ovarian cancer. Additionally, the invention relates to somatic mutations in the BRCA1 gene in other human cancers and their use in the diagnosis and prognosis of human cancers. The invention also relates to the therapy of human cancers which have a mutation in the BRCA1 gene, including gene therapy, protein replacement therapy and protein mimetics. The invention further relates to the screening of drugs for cancer therapy. Finally, the invention relates to the screening of the BRCA1 gene for mutations, which are useful for diagnosing the predisposition to breast and ovarian cancer.

The present invention provides an isolated polynucleotide comprising all, or a portion of the BRCA1 locus or of a mutated BRCA1 locus, preferably at least eight bases and not more than about 100 kb in length. Such polynucleotides may be antisense polynucleotides. The present invention also provides a recombinant construct comprising such an isolated polynucleotide, for example, a recombinant construct suitable for expression in a transformed host cell.

Also provided by the present invention are methods of detecting a polynucleotide comprising a portion of the BRCA1 locus or its expression product in an analyte. Such methods may further comprise the step of amplifying the portion of the BRCA1 locus, and may further include a step of providing a set of polynucleotides which are primers for amplification of said portion of the BRCA1 locus. The method is useful for either diagnosis of the predisposition to cancer or the diagnosis or prognosis of cancer.

The present invention also provides isolated antibodies, preferably monoclonal antibodies, which specifically bind to an isolated polypeptide comprising at least five amino acid residues encoded by the BRCA1 locus.

The present invention also provides kits for detecting in an analyte a polynucleotide comprising a portion of the BRCA1 locus, the kits comprising a polynucleotide complementary to the portion of the BRCA1 locus packaged in a suitable container, and instructions for its use.

The present invention further provides methods of preparing a polynucleotide comprising polymerizing nucleotides to yield a sequence comprised of at least eight consecutive nucleotides of the BRCA1 locus; and methods of preparing a polypeptide comprising polymerizing amino acids to yield a sequence comprising at least five amino acids encoded within the BRCA1 locus.

The present invention further provides methods of screening said polynucleotides for mutations. Such methods may further comprise the step of amplifying a portion of the BRCA1 locus, and may further include a step of providing a set of polynucleotides which are primers for amplification of said portion of the BRCA1 locus. The method is useful for identifying mutations for use in either diagnosis of the predisposition to cancer or the diagnosis or prognosis of cancer.

The present invention further provides methods for screening suspected BRCA1 mutant alleles to identify mutations in the BRCA1 gene.

In addition, the present invention provides methods of screening drugs for cancer therapy to identify suitable drugs for treating BRCA1 gene product function.

Finally, the present invention provides the means necessary for production of gene-based therapies directed at cancer cells. These therapeutic agents may take the form of polynucleotides comprising all or a portion of the BRCA1 locus placed in appropriate vectors or delivered to target cells in vivo in ways such that the function of the BRCA1 protein is reconstituted. Therapeutic agents may also take the form of polypeptides based on either a portion of, or the entire protein sequence of BRCA1. These may functionally replace the activity of BRCA1 in vivo.

It is a discovery of the present invention that the BRCA1 locus which predisposes individuals to breast cancer and ovarian cancer, is a gene encoding a BRCA1 protein, which has been found to have no significant homology with known protein or DNA sequences. This gene is termed BRCA1 herein. It is a discovery of the present invention that mutations in the BRCA1 locus in the germline are indicative of a predisposition to breast cancer and ovarian cancer. Finally, it is a discovery of the present invention that somatic mutations in the BRCA1 locus are also associated with breast cancer, ovarian cancer and other cancers, which represents an indicator of these cancers or of the prognosis of these cancers. The mutational events of the BRCA1 locus can involve deletions, insertions and point mutations within the coding sequence and the non-coding sequence.

Starting from a region on the long arm of human chromosome 17 of the human genome, 17q, which has a size estimated at about 8 million base pairs, a region which contains a genetic locus, BRCA1, which causes susceptibility to cancer, including breast and ovarian cancer, has been identified.

The region containing the BRCA1 locus was identified using a variety of genetic techniques. Genetic mapping techniques initially defined the BRCA1 region in terms of recombination with genetic markers. Based upon studies of large extended families ("kindreds") with multiple cases of breast cancer (and ovarian cancer cases in some kindreds),
a chromosomal region has been pinpointed that contains the BRCA1 gene as well as other putative susceptibility alleles in the BRCA1 locus. Two meiotic breakpoints have been discovered on the distal side of the BRCA1 locus which are expressed as recombinants between genetic markers and the disease, and one recombinant on the proximal side of the BRCA1 locus. Thus, a region which contains the BRCA1 locus is physically bounded by these markers.

The use of the genetic markers provided by this invention allowed the identification of clones which cover the region from a human yeast artificial chromosome (YAC) or a human bacterial artificial chromosome (BAC) library. It also allowed for the identification and preparation of more easily manipulatable cosmid, P1 and BAC clones from this region and the construction of a contig from a subset of the clones. These cosmids, P1s, YACs and BACs provide the basis for cloning the BRCA1 locus and provide the basis for developing reagents effective, for example, in the diagnosis and treatment of breast and ovarian cancer. The BRCA1 gene and other potential susceptibility genes have been isolated from this region.

The isolation was done using software trapping (a computational method for identifying sequences likely to contain coding exons, from contiguous or discontinuous genomic DNA sequences), hybrid selection techniques and direct screening, with whole or partial cDNA inserts from cosmid, P1s and BACs, in the region to screen cDNA libraries. These methods were used to obtain sequences of loci expressed in breast and other tissue. These candidate loci were analyzed to identify sequences which confer cancer susceptibility. We have discovered that there are mutations in the coding sequence of the BRCA1 locus in kindreds which are responsible for the 17q-linked cancer susceptibility known as BRCA1. This gene was not known to be in this region. The present invention not only facilitates the early detection of certain cancers, but vital to patient survival, but also permits the detection of susceptible individuals before they develop cancer.

Population Resources

Large, well-documented Utah kindreds are especially important in providing good resources for human genetic studies. Each large kindred independently provides the power to detect whether a BRCA1 susceptibility allele is segregating in that family. Recombinants informative for localization and isolation of the BRCA1 locus could be obtained only from kindreds large enough to confirm the presence of a susceptibility allele. Large kindreds are especially important for studying breast cancer, since penetrance of the BRCA1 susceptibility allele is reduced both by age and sex, making informative kindreds difficult to find. Furthermore, large kindreds are essential for constructing haplotypes of deceased individuals by inference from the haplotypes of their close relatives.

While other populations may also provide beneficial information, such studies generally require much greater effort, and the families are usually much smaller and thus less informative. Utah's age-adjusted breast cancer incidence is 20% lower than the average U.S. rate. The lower incidence in Utah is probably due largely to an early age at first pregnancy, increasing the probability that cases found in Utah kindreds carry a genetic predisposition.

Genetic Mapping

Given a set of informative families, genetic markers are essential for linking a disease to a region of a chromosome. Such markers include restriction fragment length polymorphisms (RFLPs) (Botstein et al., 1980), markers with a variable number of tandem repeats (VNTRs) (Jeffreys et al., 1985; Nakamura et al., 1987), and an abundant class of DNA polymorphisms based on short tandem repeat (STRs), especially repeats of CpA (Weber and May, 1989, Litt et al., 1989). To generate a genetic map, one selects potential genetic markers and tests them using DNA extracted from members of the kindreds being studied.

Genetic markers useful in searching for a genetic locus associated with a disease can be selected on an ad hoc basis, by densely covering a specific chromosome, or by detailed analysis of a specific region of a chromosome. A preferred method for selecting genetic markers linked with a disease involves evaluating the degree of informativeness of kindreds to determine the ideal distance between genetic markers of a given degree of polymorphism, then selecting markers from known genetic maps which are ideally spaced for maximal efficiency. Informativeness of kindreds is measured by the probability that the markers will be heterozygous in unrelated individuals. It is also most efficient to use STR markers which are detected by amplification of the target nucleic acid sequence using PCR; such markers are highly informative, easy to assay (Weber and May, 1989), and can be assayed simultaneously using multiplexing strategies (Skolnick and Wallis, 1989), greatly reducing the number of experiments required.

Once linkage has been established, one needs to find markers that flank the disease locus, i.e., one or more markers proximal to the disease locus, and one or more markers distal to the disease locus. Where possible, candidate markers can be selected from a known genetic map. Where none is known, new markers can be identified by the STR technique, as shown in the Examples.

Genetic mapping is usually an iterative process. In the present invention, it began by defining flanking genetic markers around the BRCA1 locus, then replacing these flanking markers with other markers that were successively closer to the BRCA1 locus. As an initial step, recombination events, defined by large extended kindreds, helped spec-
critically to localize the BRCA1 locus as either distal or proximal to a specific genetic marker (Goldgar et al., 1994).

The region surrounding BRCA1, until the disclosure of the present invention, was not well mapped and there were few markers. Therefore, short repetitive sequences on cosmids subcloned from YACs, which had been physically mapped, were analyzed in order to develop new genetic markers. Using this approach, one marker of the present invention, 42D6, was discovered which replaced pCMV66 as the distal flanking marker for the BRCA1 region. Since 42D6 is approximately 14 cm from pCMV66, the BRCA1 region was thus reduced by approximately 14 cM in Morgan (Easton et al., 1993). The present invention thus began by finding a much more closely linked distal flanking marker of the BRCA1 region. BRCA1 was then discovered to be distal to the genetic marker Mdx15. Therefore, BRCA1 was shown to be in a region of 6 to 10 million bases bounded by Mdx15 and 42D6. Marker Mdx15 was subsequently discovered to be distal to Mdx15 and proximal to BRCA1. Thus, Mdx15 was replaced with Mdx191 as the closest proximal genetic marker. Similarly, it was discovered that genetic marker Mdx188 could replace genetic marker 42D6, narrowing the region containing the BRCA1 locus to approximately 1.5 million bases. Then the marker Mdx191 was replaced with tdl1474 as the proximal marker and Mdx188 was replaced with USR as the distal marker, further narrowing the BRCA1 region to a small enough region to allow isolation and characterization of the BRCA1 locus (see Figure 3), using techniques known in the art and described herein.

Physical Mapping

Three distinct methods were employed to physically map the region. The first was the use of yeast artificial chromosomes (YACs) to clone the region which is flanked by tdl1474 and USR. The second was the creation of a set of P1, BAC and cosmid clones which cover the region containing the BRCA1 locus.

Yeast Artificial Chromosomes (YACs).

Once a sufficiently small region containing the BRCA1 locus was identified, physical isolation of the DNA in the region proceeded by identifying a set of overlapping YACs which covers the region. Useful YACs can be isolated from known libraries, such as the St. Louis and CEPH YAC libraries, which are widely distributed and contain approximately 50,000 YACs each. The YACs isolated were from those publicly accessible libraries and can be obtained from a number of sources including the Michigan Genome Center. Clearly, others who had access to these YACs, without the disclosure of the present invention, would not have known the value of the specific YACs we selected since they would not have known which YACs were within, and which YACs outside of, the smallest region containing the BRCA1 locus.

Cosmid, P1 and BAC Clones.

In the present invention, it is advantageous to proceed by obtaining cosmids, P1, and BAC clones to cover this region. The smaller size of these inserts, compared to YAC inserts, makes them more useful as specific hybridization probes. Furthermore, having the cloned DNA in bacterial cells, rather than in yeast cells, greatly increases the ease with which the DNA of interest can be manipulated, and improves the signal-to-noise ratio of hybridization assays. For cosmid subclones of YACs, the DNA is partially digested with the restriction enzyme Sau3A and cloned into the BamHI site of the pWE15 cosmid vector (Stratagene, cat. #12512). The cosmids containing human sequences are screened by hybridization with human repetitive DNA (e.g., Gsbo/BfrII, Human Csp1-1 DNA, cat. 52795A), and then fingerprinted by a variety of techniques, as detailed in the Examples.

P1 and BAC clones are obtained by screening libraries constructed from the total human genome with specific sequence tagged sites (STSs) derived from the YACs, cosmids or P1s and BACs, isolated as described herein.

These P1, BAC and cosmid clones can be compared by interspersed repetitive sequence (IRS) PCR and/or restriction enzyme digests followed by gel electrophoresis and comparison of the resulting DNA fragments ("fingerprints") (Maniatis et al., 1982). The clones can also be characterized by the presence of STSs. The fingerprints are used to define an overlapping contiguous set of clones which covers the region but is not excessively redundant, referred to herein as a "minimum tiling path". Such a minimum tiling path forms the basis for subsequent experiments to identify cDNAs which may originate from the BRCA1 locus.

Coverage of the Gap with P1 and BAC Clones.

To cover any gaps in the BRCA1 contig between the identified cosmids with genomic clones, clones in P1 and BAC vectors which contain inserts of genomic DNA roughly twice as large as cosmids for P1s and still greater for BACs (Stemberg, 1990; Stemberg et al., 1990; Pierce et al., 1992; Shizuya et al., 1992) were used. P1 clones were isolated by Genome Sciences using PCR primers provided by us for screening. BACs were provided by hybridization techniques in Dr. Mel Simon's laboratory. The strategy of using P1 clones also permitted the covering of the genomic region with
an independent set of clones not derived from YACs. This guards against the possibility of other deletions in YACs that have not been detected. These new sequences derived from the P1 clones provide the material for further screening for candidate genes, as described below.

5 Gene Isolation.

There are many techniques for testing genomic clones for the presence of sequences likely to be candidates for the coding sequence of a locus one is attempting to isolate, including but not limited to:

10 a. zoo blots

b. identifying HTF islands

c. exon trapping

d. hybridizing cDNA to cosmids or YACs.

e. screening cDNA libraries.

20 (a) Zoo blots.

The first technique is to hybridize cosmids to Southern blots to identify DNA sequences which are evolutionarily conserved, and which therefore give positive hybridization signals with DNA from species of varying degrees of relationship to humans (such as monkey, cow, chicken, pig, mouse and rat). Southern blots containing such DNA from a variety of species are commercially available (Clontech, Cat. 7750-1).

(b) Identifying HTF islands.

The second technique involves finding regions rich in the nucleotides C and G, which often occur near or within coding sequences. Such sequences are called HTF (HpaI liny fragment) or CpG islands, as restriction enzymes specific for sites which contain CpG dimers cut frequently in these regions (Lindsay et al., 1987).

(c) Exon trapping.

The third technique is exon trapping, a method that identifies sequences in genomic DNA which contain splice junctions and therefore are likely to comprise coding sequences of genes. Exon amplification (Buckler et al., 1991) is used to select and amplify exons from DNA clones described above. Exon amplification is based on the selection of RNA sequences which are flanked by functional 5' and/or 3' splice sites. The products of the exon amplification are used to screen the breast cDNA libraries to identify a manageable number of candidate genes for further study. Exon trapping can also be performed on small segments of sequenced DNA using computer programs or by software trapping.

(d) Hybridizing cDNA to Cosmids, P1s, BACs or YACs.

The fourth technique is a modification of the selective enrichment technique which utilizes hybridization of cDNA to cosmids, P1s, BACs or YACs and permits transcribed sequences to be identified in, and recovered from cloned genomic DNA (Kandpal et al., 1990). The selective enrichment technique, as modified for the present purpose, involves binding DNA from the region of BRCA1 present in a YAC to a column matrix and selecting cDNAs from the relevant libraries which hybridize with the bound DNA, followed by amplification and purification of the bound DNA, resulting in a great enrichment for cDNAs in the region represented by the cloned genomic DNA.

(e) Identification of cDNAs.

The fifth technique is to identify cDNAs that correspond to the BRCA1 locus. Hybridization probes containing putative coding sequences, selected using any of the above techniques, are used to screen various libraries, including breast tissue cDNA libraries, ovarian cDNA libraries, and any other necessary libraries.

Another variation on the theme of direct selection of cDNA was also used to find candidate genes for BRCA1 (Lovett et al., 1991; Futreal, 1993). This method uses cosmids, P1 or BAC DNA as the probe. The probe DNA is digested with a blunt cutting restriction enzyme such as HpaII. Double stranded adapters are then ligated onto the DNA and serve
as binding sites for primers in subsequent PCR amplification reactions using biotinylated primers. Target cDNA is generated from mRNA derived from tissue samples, e.g., breast tissues, by synthesis of either random primed or oligo(dT) primed first strand followed by second strand synthesis. The cDNA ends are rendered blunt and ligated onto double-stranded adapters. These adapters serve as amplification sites for PCR. The target and probe sequences are denatured and mixed with human Cyt-B DNA to block repetitive sequences. Solution hybridization is carried out to high Cyt-B values to ensure hybridization of rare target cDNA molecules. The annealed material is then captured on avidin beads, washed at high stringency and the retained cDNAs are eluted and amplified by PCR. The selected cDNA is subjected to further rounds of enrichment before cloning into a plasmid vector for analysis.

Testing the cDNA for Candidacy

Proof that the cDNA is the BRCA1 locus is obtained by finding sequences in DNA extracted from affected kindred members which create abnormal BRCA1 gene products or abnormal levels of BRCA1 gene product. Such BRCA1 susceptibility alleles will co-segregate with the disease in large kindreds. They will also be present at a much higher frequency in non-kindred individuals with breast and ovarian cancer than in individuals in the general population. Finally, since tumors often mutate somatically at loci which are in other instances mutated in the germline, we expect to see normal germline BRCA1 alleles mutated into sequences which are identical or similar to BRCA1 susceptibility alleles in DNA extracted from tumor tissue. Whether one is comparing BRCA1 sequences from tumor tissue to BRCA1 alleles from the germline of the same individuals, or one is comparing germline BRCA1 alleles from cancer cases to those from unaffected individuals, the key is to find mutations which are serious enough to cause obvious disruption to the normal function of the gene product. These mutations can take a number of forms. The most severe forms would be frame shift mutations or large deletions which would cause the gene to code for an abnormal protein or one which would significantly alter protein expression. Less severe disruptive mutations would include small in-frame deletions and nonconservative base pair substitutions which would have a significant effect on the protein produced, such as changes to or from a cysteine residue, from a basic to an acidic amino acid or vice versa, from a hydrophobic to hydrophilic amino acid or vice versa, or other mutations which would affect secondary, tertiary or quaternary protein structure. Silent mutations or those resulting in conservative amino acid substitutions would not generally be expected to disrupt protein function.

According to the diagnostic and prognostic method of the present invention, alteration of the wild-type BRCA1 locus is detected. In addition, the method can be performed by detecting the wild-type BRCA1 locus and confirming the lack of a predisposition to cancer at the BRCA1 locus. "Alteration of a wild-type gene" encompasses all forms of mutations including deletions, insertions and point mutations in the coding and noncoding regions. Defects may be of the entire gene or of only a portion of the gene. Point mutations may result in stop codons, frameshift mutations or amino acid substitutions. Somatic mutations are those which occur only in certain tissues, e.g., in the tumor tissue, and are not inherited in the germline. Germline mutations can be found in any of a body’s tissues and are inherited. If only a single allele is somatically mutated, an early neoplastic state is indicated. However, if both alleles are somatically mutated, then a late neoplastic state is indicated. The finding of BRCA1 mutations thus provides both diagnostic and prognostic information. A BRCA1 allele which is not deleted (e.g., found on the sister chromosome to a chromosome carrying a BRCA1 deletion) can be screened for other mutations, such as insertions, small deletions, and point mutations. It is believed that many mutations found in tumor tissues will be those leading to decreased expression of the BRCA1 gene product. However, mutations leading to non-functional gene products would also lead to a cancerous state. Point mutational events may occur in regulatory regions, such as in the promoter of the gene, leading to loss of expression of the mRNA. Point mutations may also abolish proper RNA processing, leading to loss of expression of the BRCA1 gene product, or to a decrease in mRNA stability or translation efficiency.

Useful diagnostic techniques include, but are not limited to fluorescent in situ hybridization (FISH), direct DNA sequencing, PFGE analysis, Southern blot analysis, single stranded conformation analysis (SSCA), RNAse protection assay, allele-specific oligonucleotide (ASO), dot blot analysis and PCR-SSCP, as discussed in detail further below.

Frequencies to cancers, such as breast and ovarian cancer, and the other cancers identified herein, can be ascertained by testing any tissue of a human for mutations of the BRCA1 gene. For example, a person who has inherited a germline BRCA1 mutation would be prone to develop cancers. This can be determined by testing DNA from any tissue of the patient’s body. Most simply, blood can be drawn and DNA extracted from the cells of the blood. In addition, prenatal diagnosis can be accomplished by testing fetal cells, placental cells or amniotic cells for mutations of the BRCA1 gene. Alteration of a wild-type BRCA1 allele, whether, for example, by point mutation or deletion, can be detected by any of the means discussed herein.

There are several methods that can be used to detect DNA sequence variation. Direct DNA sequencing, either manual sequencing or automated fluorescent sequencing can detect sequence variation. For a gene as large as BRCA1, manual sequencing is very labor-intensive, but under optimal conditions, mutations in the coding sequence of a gene are rarely missed. Another approach is the single-stranded conformation polymorphism assay (SSCP) (Orita et al., 1989). This method does not detect all sequence changes, especially if the DNA fragment size is greater than 200 bp,
but can be optimized to detect most DNA sequence variation. The reduced detection sensitivity is a disadvantage, but the increased throughput possible with SSCA makes it an attractive, viable alternative to direct sequencing for mutation detection on a research basis. The fragments which have shifted mobility on SSCA gels are then sequenced to determine the exact nature of the DNA sequence variation. Other approaches based on the detection of mismatches between the two complementary DNA strands include clamped denaturing gel electrophoresis (CDGE) (Sheffield et al., 1991), heteroduplex analysis (HA) (White et al., 1992) and chemical mismatch cleavage (CMC) (Grompe et al., 1989). None of the methods described above will detect large deletions, duplications or insertions, nor will they detect a regulatory mutation which affects transcription or translation of the protein. Other methods which might detect these classes of mutations such as a protein truncation assay or the asymmetric assay, detect only specific types of mutations and would not detect missense mutations. A review of currently available methods of detecting DNA sequence variation can be found in a recent review by Grompe (1993). Once a mutation is known, an allele-specific detection approach such as allele-specific oligonucleotide (ASO) hybridization can be utilized to rapidly screen large numbers of other samples for that same mutation.

In order to detect the alteration of the wild-type BRCA1 gene in a tissue, it is helpful to isolate the tissue free from surrounding normal tissues. Means for enriching tissue preparation for tumor cells are known in the art. For example, the tissue may be isolated from paraffin or cryostat sections. Cancer cells may also be separated from normal cells by flow cytometry. These techniques, as well as other techniques for separating tumor cells from normal cells, are well known in the art. If the tumor tissue is highly contaminated with normal cells, detection of mutations is more difficult.

A rapid preliminary analysis to detect polymorphisms in DNA sequences can be performed by looking at a series of Southern blots of DNA cut with one or more restriction enzymes, preferably with a large number of restriction enzymes. Each blot contains a series of normal individuals and a series of cancer cases, tumors, or both. Southern blots displaying hybridizing fragments (differing in length from control DNA when probed with sequences near or including the BRCA1 locus) indicate a possible mutation. If restriction enzymes which produce very large restriction fragments are used, then pulsed field gel electrophoresis (PFGE) is employed.

Detection of point mutations may be accomplished by molecular cloning of the BRCA1 allele(s) and sequencing the allele(s) using techniques well known in the art. Alternatively, the gene sequences can be amplified directly from a genomic DNA preparation from the tumor tissue, using known techniques. The DNA sequence of the amplified sequences can then be determined.

There are six well known methods for a more complete, yet still indirect, test for confirming the presence of a susceptibility allele: 1) single stranded conformation analysis (SSCA) (Orta et al., 1990; 2) denaturing gradient gel electrophoresis (DGGE) (Kawabata et al., 1990; Sheffield et al., 1989); 3) RNase protection assays (Finkelstein et al., 1990; Kinszer et al., 1991); 4) allele-specific oligonucleotides (ASOs) (Conner et al., 1983); 5) the use of proteins which recognize nucleotide mismatches, such as the E. coli mutS protein (Modrich, 1981), and 6) allele-specific PCR (Fano & Kidd, 1989). For allele-specific PCR, primers are used which hybridize at their 3' ends to a particular BRCA1 mutation.

If the particular BRCA1 mutation is not present, an amplification product is not observed. Amplification Refractory Mutation System (ARMS) can also be used, as disclosed in European Patent Application Publication No. 00530435 and in Newton et al., 1990. In addition, restriction fragment length polymorphism (RFLP) probes for the gene or surrounding marker genes can be used to score alteration of an allele or an insertion in a polymorphic fragment. Such a method is particularly useful for screening relatives of an affected individual for the presence of the BRCA1 mutation found in that individual. Other techniques for detecting insertions and deletions as known in the art can be used.

In the first three methods (SSCA, DGGE and RNase protection assay), a new electrophoretic band appears. SSCA detects a band which migrates differentially because the sequence change causes a difference in single-strand, intramolecular base pairing. DGGE detects differences in migration rates of mutant sequences compared to wild-type sequences, using a denaturing gradient gel. In an allele-specific oligonucleotide assay, an oligonucleotide is designed which detects a specific sequence, and the assay is performed by detecting the presence or absence of a hybridization signal. In the mutS assay, the protein binds only to sequences that contain a nucleotide mismatch in a heteroduplex between mutant and wild-type sequences.

Mismatched, according to the present invention, are hybridized nucleic acid duplexes in which the two strands are not 100% complementary. Lack of total homology may be due to deletions, insertions, inversions or substitutions. Mismatch detection can be used to detect point mutations in the gene or in its mRNA product. While these techniques are less sensitive than sequencing, they are simpler to perform on a large number of tumor samples. An example of a mismatch cleavage technique is the RNase protection method. In the practice of the present invention, the method involves the use of a labeled riboprobe which is complementary to the human wild-type BRCA1 gene coding sequence. The riboprobe and either mRNA or DNA isolated from the tumor tissue are annealed (hybridized) together and subsequently digested with the enzyme RNase A which is able to detect some mismatches in a duplex RNA structure. If a mismatch is detected by RNase A, it cleaves at the site of the mismatch. Thus, when the annealed RNA preparation is
separated on an electrophoretic gel matrix. If a mismatch has been detected and cleaved by RNase A, an RNA product will be seen which is smaller than the full length duplex RNA for the riboprobe and the mRNA or DNA. The riboprobe need not be the full length of the BRCA1 mRNA or gDNA but can be a segment of either. If the riboprobe contains only a segment of the BRCA1 mRNA or gDNA, it will be desirable to use a number of these probes to screen the whole mRNA sequence for mismatches.

In similar fashion, DNA probes can be used to detect mismatches, through enzymatic or chemical cleavage. See, e.g., Cotton et al., 1983; Shenk et al., 1975; Novack et al., 1986. Alternatively, mismatches can be detected by shifts in the electrophoretic mobility of mismatched duplexes relative to matched duplexes. See, e.g., Carasso, 1988. With either riboprobes or DNA probes, the cellular mRNA or DNA which might contain a mutation can be amplified using PCR (see below) before hybridization. Changes in DNA of the BRCA1 gene can also be detected using Southern hybridization, especially if the changes are gross rearrangements, such as deletions and insertions.

DNA sequences of the BRCA1 gene which have been amplified by use of PCR may also be screened using allele-specific probes. These probes are nucleic acid oligomers, each of which contains a region of the BRCA1 gene sequence harboring a known mutation. For example, one oligomer may be about 30 nucleotides in length, corresponding to a portion of the BRCA1 gene sequence. By use of a battery of such allele-specific probes, PCR amplification products can be screened to identify the presence of a previously identified mutation in the BRCA1 gene. Hybridization of allele-specific probes with amplified BRCA1 sequences can be performed, for example, on a nylon filter. Hybridization to a particular probe under stringent hybridization conditions indicates the presence of the same mutation in the tumor tissue as in the allele-specific probe.

The most definitive test for mutations in a candidate locus is to directly compare genomic BRCA1 sequences from cancer patients with those from a control population. Alternatively, one could sequence messenger RNA after amplification, e.g., by PCR, thereby eliminating the necessity of determining the exon structure of the candidate gene.

Mutations from cancer patients falling outside the coding region of BRCA1 can be detected by examining the non-coding regions, such as introns and regulatory sequences near or within the BRCA1 gene. An early indication that mutations in non-coding regions are important may come from Northern blot experiments that reveal messenger RNA molecules of abnormal size or abundance in cancer patients as compared to control individuals.

Alteration of BRCA1 mRNA expression can be detected by any techniques known in the art. These include Northern blot analysis, PCR amplification and RNase protection. Diminished mRNA expression indicates an alteration of the wild-type BRCA1 gene. Alteration of wild-type BRCA1 genes can also be detected by screening for alteration of wild-type BRCA1 protein. For example, monoclonal antibodies immunoreactive with BRCA1 can be used to screen tissues. Lack of cognate antigen would indicate a BRCA1 mutation. Antibodies specific for products of mutant alleles could also be used to detect mutant BRCA1 gene product. Such immunological assays can be done in any convenient format now known in the art. These include Western blots, immunohistochemical assays and ELISA assays. Any means for detecting an altered BRCA1 protein can be used to detect alteration of wild-type BRCA1 gene. Functional assays, such as protein binding determinations, can be used in addition, assays can be used which detect BRCA1 biochemical function. Finding a mutant BRCA1 gene product indicates alteration of a wild-type BRCA1 gene.

Mutant BRCA1 genes or gene products can also be detected in other human body samples, such as serum, stool, urine and sputum. The same techniques discussed above for detection of mutant BRCA1 genes or gene products in tissue can be applied to other body samples. Cancer cells are sloughed off from tumors and appear in such body samples. In addition, the BRCA1 gene product itself may be secreted into the extracellular space and found in these body samples even in the absence of cancer cells. By screening such body samples, a simple early diagnosis can be achieved for many types of cancers. In addition, the progress of chemotherapy or radiotherapy can be monitored more easily by testing such body samples for mutant BRCA1 genes or gene products.

The methods of diagnosis of the present invention are applicable to any tumor in which BRCA1 has a role in tumorigenesis. The diagnostic method of the present invention is useful for clinicians, so they can decide upon an appropriate course of treatment.

The primer pairs of the present invention are useful for determination of the nucleotide sequence of a particular BRCA1 allele using PCR. The pairs of single-stranded DNA primers can be annealed to sequences within or surrounding the BRCA1 gene on chromosome 17q21 in order to prime amplifying DNA synthesis of the BRCA1 gene itself. A complete set of these primers allows synthesis of all of the nucleotides of the BRCA1 gene coding sequences, i.e., the exons. The set of primers preferably allows synthesis of both intron and exon sequences. Allele-specific primers can also be used. Such primers anneal only to particular BRCA1 mutant alleles, and thus will only amplify a product in the presence of the mutant allele as a template.

In order to facilitate subsequent cloning of amplified sequences, primers may have restriction enzyme site sequences appended to their 5' ends. Thus, all nucleotides of the primers are derived from BRCA1 sequences or sequences adjacent to BRCA1, except for the few nucleotides necessary to form a restriction enzyme site. Such enzymes and sites are well known in the art. The primers themselves can be synthesized using techniques which are well known in the art. Generally, the primers can be made using oligonucleotide synthesizing machines which are commercially available. Given the
sequence of the BRCA1 open reading frame shown in SEQ ID NO:1, design of particular primers is well within the skill of the art.

The nucleic acid probes provided by the present invention are useful for a number of purposes. They can be used in Southern hybridization to genomic DNA and in the RNase protection method for detecting point mutations already discussed above. The probes can be used to detect PCR amplification products. They may also be used to detect mismatches with the BRCA1 gene or mRNA using other techniques.

It has been discovered that individuals with the wild-type BRCA1 gene do not have cancer which results from the BRCA1 allele. However, mutations which interfere with the function of the BRCA1 protein are involved in the pathogenesis of cancer. Thus, the presence of an altered (or a mutant) BRCA1 gene which produces a protein having a loss of function, or altered function, directly correlates to an increased risk of cancer. In order to detect a BRCA1 gene mutation, a biological sample is prepared and analyzed for a difference between the sequence of the BRCA1 allele being analyzed and the sequence of the wild-type BRCA1 allele. Mutant BRCA1 alleles can be initially identified by any of the techniques described above. The mutant alleles are then sequenced to identify the specific mutation of the particular mutant allele.

Alternatively, mutant BRCA1 alleles can be initially identified by identifying mutant (altered) BRCA1 proteins, using conventional techniques. The mutant alleles are then sequenced to identify the specific mutation for each allele. The mutations, especially those which lead to an altered function of the BRCA1 protein, are then used for the diagnostic and prognostic methods of the present invention.

Definitions

The present invention employs the following definitions:

"Amplification of Polynucleotides" utilizes methods such as the polymerase chain reaction (PCR), ligation amplification (or ligase chain reaction, LCR) and amplification methods based on the use of C-beta replicase. These methods are well known and widely practiced in the art. See, e.g., U.S. Patents 4,683,195 and 4,683,202 and Innis et al. 1990 (for PCR); and Wu et al., 1989a (for LCR). Reagents and hardware for conducting PCR are commercially available.

Primers useful to amplify sequences from the BRCA1 region are preferably complementary to, and hybridize specifically to sequences in the BRCA1 region or in regions which flanks a target region therein. BRCA1 sequences generated by amplification may be sequenced directly. Alternatively, but less desirably, the amplified sequence(s) may be cloned prior to sequence analysis. A method for the direct cloning and sequence analysis of enzymatically amplified genomic segments has been described by Scharf, 1986.

"Analyte polynucleotide" and "analyte strand" refer to a single- or double-stranded polynucleotide which is suspected of containing a target sequence, and which may be present in a variety of types of samples, including biological samples.

"Antibodies." The present invention also provides polyclonal and/or monoclonal antibodies and fragments thereof, and immunologic binding equivalents thereof, which are capable of specifically binding to the BRCA1 polypeptides and fragments thereof or to polynucleotide sequences from the BRCA1 region, particularly from the BRCA1 locus or a portion thereof. The term "antibody" is used both to refer to a homogenous molecular entity, or a mixture such as a serum product made up of a plurality of different molecular entities. Polypeptides may be prepared synthetically in a peptide synthesizer and coupled to a carrier molecule (e.g., keyhole limpet hemocyanin) and injected over several months into rabbits. Rabbit sera is tested for immunoreactivity to the BRCA1 polypeptide or fragment. Monoclonal antibodies may be made by injecting mice with the protein polypeptides, fusion proteins or fragments thereof. Monoclonal antibodies will be screened by ELISA and tested for specific immunoreactivity with BRCA1 polypeptide or fragments thereof. See, Harlow & Lane, 1988. These antibodies will be useful in assays as well as pharmaceuticals.

Once a sufficient quantity of desired polypeptide has been obtained, it may be used for various purposes. A typical use is the production of antibodies specific for binding. These antibodies may be either polyclonal or monoclonal, and may be produced by in vitro or in vivo techniques well known in the art. For production of polyclonal antibodies, an appropriate target immune system, typically mouse or rabbit, is selected. Substantially purified antigen is presented to the immune system in a fashion determined by methods appropriate for the animal and by other parameters well known to immunologists. Typical sites for injection are in footpads, intramuscularly, intraperitoneally, or intradermally. Of course, other species may be substituted for mice or rabbit. Polyclonal antibodies are then purified using techniques known in the art, adjusted for the desired specificity.

An immunological response is usually assayed with an immunoassay. Normally, such immunoassays involve some purification of a source of antigen, for example, that produced by the same cells and in the same fashion as the antigen. A variety of immunoassay methods are well known in the art. See, e.g., Harlow & Lane, 1988, or Goding, 1986.

Monoclonal antibodies with affinities of $10^{-7} M^{-1}$ or preferably $10^{-9}$ to $10^{-1} M^{-1}$ are usually selected by standard procedures as described, e.g., in Harlow & Lane, 1988 or Goding, 1986. Briefly, appropriate animals will be selected and the desired immunization protocol followed. After the appropriate period of time, the spleens of such animals are excised and individual spleen cells fused, typically, to immortalized myeloma cells under appropriate selec-
tion conditions. Thereafter, the cells are cloned separately and the supernatants of each clone tested for their production of an appropriate antibody specific for the desired region of the antigen.

Other suitable techniques involve in vitro exposure of lymphocytes to the antigenic polypeptides, or alternatively, to selection of libraries of antibodies in phage or similar vectors. See Hua et al., 1989. The polypeptides and antibodies of the present invention may be used with or without modification. Frequently, polypeptides and antibodies will be labeled by joining, either covalently or non-covalently, a substance which provides for a detectable signal. A wide variety of labels and conjugation techniques are known and are reported extensively in both the scientific and patent literature. Suitable labels include radioucidines, enzymes, substrates, cofactors, inhibitors, fluorescent agents, chemiluminescent agents, magnetic particles and the like. Patents teaching the use of such labels include U.S. Patents 3,817,657; 3,950,752; 3,939,350; 3,998,345; 4,277,437; 4,275,149 and 4,356,241. Also, recombinant immunoglobulins may be produced (see U.S. Patent 4,816,567).

"Binding partner" refers to a molecule capable of binding to a ligand molecule with high specificity, as for example, an antigen and an antigen-specific antibody or an enzyme and its inhibitor. In general, the specific binding partners must bind with sufficient affinity to immobilize the analyte copy/complementary strand duplex (in the case of polynucleotide hybridization) under the isolation conditions. Specific binding partners are known in the art and include, for example, biotin and avidin or streptavidin, IgG and protein A, the numerous, known receptor-ligand couples, and complementary polynucleotide strands. In the case of complementary polynucleotide binding partners, the partners are normally at least about 15 bases in length and may be at least 40 bases in length. The polynucleotides may be composed of DNA, RNA, or synthetic nucleic acid analogs.

A "biological sample" refers to a sample of tissue or fluid suspected of containing an analyte polynucleotide or polypeptide from an individual including, but not limited to, e.g., plasma, serum, spinal fluid, lymph fluid, the external sections of the skin, respiratory, intestinal, and genitourinary tracts, tears, saliva, blood cells, tumors, organs, tissue, and samples of in vitro cell culture constituents. As used herein, the terms "diagnosing" or "prognosing," as used in the context of neoplasia, are used to indicate 1) the classification of lesions as neoplasia, 2) the determination of the severity of the neoplasia, or 3) the monitoring of the disease progression, prior to, during and after treatment.

"Encode". A polynucleotide is said to "encode" a polypeptide if, in its native state or when manipulated by methods well known to those skilled in the art, it can be transcribed and/or translated to produce the mRNA for and/or the polypeptide or a fragment thereof. The anti-sense strand is the complement of such a nucleic acid, and the encoding sequence can be deduced therefrom.

"Isolated" or "substantially pure". An "isolated" or "substantially pure" nucleic acid (e.g., an RNA, DNA or a mixed polymer) is one which is substantially separated from other cellular components which naturally accompany a native human sequence or protein, e.g., ribosomes, polymerases, many other human genome sequences and proteins. The term embraces a nucleic acid sequence or protein which has been removed from its naturally occurring environment, and includes recombinant or cloned DNA isolates and chemically synthesized analogs or analogs biologically synthesized by heterologous systems.

"BRCA1 Allele" refers to normal alleles of the BRCA1 locus as well as alleles carrying variations that predispose individuals to develop cancer of many sites including, for example, breast, ovarian, colorectal and prostate cancer. Such predisposing alleles are also called "BRCA1 susceptibility alleles".

"BRCA1 Locus," "BRCA1 Gene," "BRCA1 Nucleic Acids" or "BRCA1 Polynucleotide" each refer to polynucleotides, all of which are in the BRCA1 region, that are likely to be expressed in normal tissue, certain alleles of which predispose an individual to develop breast, ovarian, colorectal and prostate cancers. Mutations at the BRCA1 locus may be involved in the initiation and/or progression of other types of tumors. The locus is indicated in part by mutations that predispose individuals to develop cancer. These mutations fall within the BRCA1 region described infra.

The BRCA1 locus is intended to include coding sequences, intervening sequences and regulatory elements controlling transcription and/or translation. The BRCA1 locus is intended to include all allelic variations of the DNA sequence.

These terms, when applied to a nucleic acid, refer to a nucleic acid which encodes a BRCA1 polypeptide, fragment, homolog or variant, including, e.g., protein fusions or deletions. The nucleic acids of the present invention will possess a sequence which is either derived from, or substantially similar to a natural BRCA1-encoding gene or one having substantial homology with a natural BRCA1-encoding gene or a portion thereof. The coding sequence for a BRCA1 polypeptide is shown in SEQ ID NO:1, with the amino acid sequence shown in SEQ ID NO:2.

The polynucleotide compositions of this invention include RNA, cDNA, genomic DNA, synthetic forms, and mixed polymers, both sense and antisense strands, and may be chemically or biochemically modified or may contain non-natural or derivatized nucleotide bases, as will be readily appreciated by those skilled in the art. Such modifications include, for example, labels, methylation, substitution of one or more of the naturally occurring nucleotides with an analog, internucleotide modifications such as uncharged linkages (e.g., methyl phosphonates, phosphorothioates, phosphorodiamidates, carbamates, etc.), charged linkages (e.g., phosphorothioates, phosphorodithioates, etc.), pendant moieties (e.g., polypeptides), intercalators (e.g., acridine, psoralen, etc.), chelators, alkylators, and modified linkages (e.g., alpha ano-
meric nucleic acids, etc.). Also included are synthetic molecules that mimic polynucleotides in their ability to bind to a designated sequence via hydrogen bonding and other chemical interactions. Such molecules are known in the art and include, for example, those in which peptide linkages substitute for phosphate linkages in the backbone of the molecule.

The present invention provides recombinant nucleic acids comprising all or part of the BRCA1 region. The recombinant construct may be capable of replicating autonomously in a host cell. Alternatively, the recombinant construct may be integrated into the chromosomal DNA of the host cell. Such a recombinant polynucleotide comprises a polynucleotide of genomic, cDNA, semi-synthetic, or synthetic origin which, by virtue of its origin or manipulation, 1) is not associated with all or a portion of a polynucleotide with which it is associated in nature, 2) is linked to a polynucleotide other than that to which it is linked in nature, or 3) does not occur in nature.

Therefore, recombinant nucleic acids comprising sequences otherwise not naturally occurring are provided by this invention. Although the wild-type sequence may be employed, it will often be altered, e.g., by deletion, substitution or insertion.

cDNA or genomic libraries of various types may be screened as natural sources of the nucleic acids of the present invention, or such nucleic acids may be provided by amplification of sequences resident in genomic DNA or other natural sources, e.g., by PCR. The choice of cDNA libraries normally corresponds to a tissue source which is abundant in mRNA for the desired proteins. Phage libraries are normally preferred, but other types of libraries may be used. Clones of a library are spread onto plates, transferred to a substrate for screening, denatured and probed for the presence of desired sequences.

The DNA sequences used in this invention will usually comprise at least about five codons (15 nucleotides), more usually at least about 7-15 codons, and most preferably, at least about 35 codons. One or more introns may also be present. This number of nucleotides is usually about the minimal length required for a successful probe that would hybridize specifically with a BRCA1-encoding sequence.

Techniques for nucleic acid manipulation are described generally, for example, in Sambrook et al., 1989 or Ausubel et al., 1992. Reagents useful in applying such techniques, such as restriction enzymes and the like, are widely know in the art and commercially available from such vendors as New England Biolabs, Boehringer Mannheim, Promega Biotech, U.S. Biochemicals, New England Nuclear, and a number of other sources. The recombinant nucleic acid sequences used to produce fusion proteins of the present invention may be derived from natural or synthetic sequences. Many natural gene sequences are obtainable from various cDNA or from genomic libraries using appropriate probes. See, GenBank: National Institutes of Health.

"BRCA1 Region" refers to a portion of human chromosome 17q21 bounded by the markers ID1474 and UEF. This region contains the BRCA1 locus, including the BRCA1 gene.

As used herein, the terms "BRCA1 locus," "BRCA1 allele" and "BRCA1 region" all refer to the double-stranded DNA comprising the locus, allele, or region, as well as either of the single-stranded DNAs comprising the locus, allele or region. As used herein, a "portion" of the BRCA1 locus or region or allele is defined as having a minimal size of at least about eight nucleotides, or preferably about 15 nucleotides, or more preferably at least about 25 nucleotides, and may have a minimal size of at least about 40 nucleotides.

"BRCA1 protein" or "BRCA1 polypeptide" refer to a protein or polypeptide encoded by the BRCA1 locus, variants or fragments thereof. The term "polypeptide" refers to a polymer of amino acids and its equivalent and does not refer to a specific length of the product; thus, peptides, oligopeptides and proteins are included within the definition of a polypeptide. This term also does not refer to, or exclude modifications of the polypeptide, for example, glycosylations, acetylations, phosphorylations, and the like. Included within the definition are, for example, polypeptides containing one or more analogs of an amino acid (including, for example, unnatural amino acids, etc.), polypeptides with substituted linkages as well as other modifications known in the art, both naturally and non-naturally occurring. Ordinarily, such polypeptides will be at least about 60% homologous to the native BRCA1 sequence, preferably in excess of about 90%, and more preferably at least about 95% homologous. Also included are proteins encoded by DNA which hybridizes under high or lowest stringency conditions, to BRCA1-encoding nucleic acids and closely related polypeptides or proteins retrieved by antisera to the BRCA1 protein(s).

The length of polypeptide sequences compared for homology will generally be at least about 16 amino acids, usually at least about 20 residues, more usually at least about 24 residues, typically at least about 28 residues, and preferably more than about 35 residues.

"Operably linked" refers to a juxtaposition wherein the components so described are in a relationship permitting them to function in their intended manner. For instance, a promoter is operably linked to a coding sequence if the promoter affects its transcription or expression.

"Probes": Polynucleotide polymorphisms associated with BRCA1 alleles which predispose to certain cancers or are associated with most cancers are detected by hybridization with a polynucleotide probe which forms a stable hybrid with that of the target sequence, under stringent to moderately stringent hybridization and wash conditions. If it is expected that the probes will be perfectly complementary to the target sequence, stringent conditions will be used. Hybridization stringency may be loosened if some mismatching is expected, for example, if variants are expected with the
result that the probe will not be completely complementary. Conditions are chosen which rule out non-specific/ adventitious bindings, that is, which minimize noise. Since such indications identify neutral DNA polymorphisms as well as mutations, these indications need further analysis to demonstrate detection of a BRCA1 susceptibility allele.

Probes for BRCA1 alleles may be derived from the sequences of the BRCA1 region or its cDNAs. The probes may be of any suitable length, which span all or a portion of the BRCA1 region, and which allow specific hybridization to the BRCA1 region. If the target sequence contains a sequence identical to that of the probe, the probes may be short, e.g., in the range of about 9-30 base pairs, since the hybrid will be relatively stable under stringent conditions. If some degree of mismatch is expected with the probe, i.e., if it is suspected that the probe will hybridize to a variant region, a longer probe may be employed which hybridizes to the target sequence with the requisite specificity.

The probes will include an isolated polynucleotide attached to a label or reporter molecule and may be used to isolate other polynucleotide sequences, having sequence similarity by standard methods. For techniques for preparing and labeling probes see, e.g., Sambrook et al., 1989 or Ausubel et al., 1992. Other labels may be selected by using homogeneous polynucleotides. Alternatively, polynucleotides encoding these or similar polypeptides may be synthesized or selected by use of the redundancy in the genetic code. Various codon substitutions may be introduced, e.g., by silent changes (thereby producing various restriction sites) or to enhance expression for a particular system. Mutations may be introduced to modify the properties of the polypeptide, perhaps to change ligand-binding affinities, interchain affinities, or the peptidolysis degradation or turnover rate.

Probes comprising synthetic oligonucleotides or other polynucleotides of the present invention may be derived from naturally occurring or recombinant single- or double-stranded polynucleotides, or be chemically synthesized. Probes may also be labeled by nick translation, Klenow fill-in reaction, or other methods known in the art.

Portions of the polynucleotide sequence having at least about eight nucleotides, usually at least about 15 nucleotides, and fewer than about 6 kb, usually fewer than about 1.0 kb, from a polynucleotide sequence encoding BRCA1 are preferred as probes. The probes may also be used to determine whether mRNA encoding BRCA1 is present in a cell or tissue.

**Protein modifications or fragments** are provided by the present invention for BRCA1 polypeptides or fragments thereof which are substantially homologous to primary structural sequence but which include, e.g., in vivo or in vitro chemical and biochemical modifications or which incorporate unusual amino acids. Such modifications include, for example, acetylation, carboxylation, phosphorylation, glycosylation, ubiquitination, labeling, e.g., with radioisotopes, and various enzymatic modifications, as will be readily appreciated by those well skilled in the art. A variety of methods for labeling polypeptides and of substituents or labels useful for such purposes are well known in the art, and include radioactively labeled such as 32P, ligands which bind to labeled antigens (e.g., antibodies), fluorophores, chemiluminescent agents, enzymes, and antigens which can serve as specific binding pair members for a labeled ligand. The choice of label depends on the sensitivity required, ease of conjugation with the primer, stability requirements, and available instrumentation. Methods of labeling polypeptides are well known in the art. See, e.g., Sambrook et al., 1989 or Ausubel et al., 1992.

Besides substantially full-length polypeptides, the present invention provides for biologically active fragments of the polypeptides. Significant biological activities include ligand-binding, immunological activity and other biological activities characteristic of BRCA1 polypeptides. Immunological activities include both immunogenic function in a target immune system, as well as sharing of immunological epitopes for binding, serving as either a competitor or substitute antigen for an epitope of the BRCA1 protein. As used herein, "epitope" refers to an antigenic determinant of a polypeptide. An epitope could comprise three amino acids in a spatial conformation which is unique to the epitope. Generally, an epitope consists of at least five such amino acids, and more usually consists of at least 8-10 such amino acids. Methods of determining the spatial conformation of such amino acids are known in the art.

For immunological purposes, tandem-repeat polypeptide segments may be used as immunogens, thereby producing highly antigenic proteins. Alternatively, such polypeptides will serve as highly efficient competitors for specific binding. Production of antibodies specific for BRCA1 polypeptides or fragments thereof is described below.

The present invention also provides for fusion polypeptides, comprising BRCA1 polypeptides and fragments. Homologous polypeptides may be fusions between two or more BRCA1 polypeptide sequences or between the sequences of BRCA1 and a related protein. Likewise, heterologous fusions may be constructed which would exhibit a combination of properties or activities of the derivative proteins. For example, ligand-binding or other domains may be "swapped" between different new fusion polypeptides or fragments. Such homologous or heterologous fusion polypeptides may be utilized, for example, altered strength of specificity of binding. Fusion partners include immunoglobulins, bacterial β-galactosidase, trpE, protein A, β-lactamase, alpha amylase, alcohol dehydrogenase and yeast alpha mating factor. See, e.g., Godowski et al., 1988.

Fusion proteins will typically be made by either recombinant nucleic acid methods, as described below, or may be chemically synthesized. Techniques for the synthesis of polypeptides are described, for example, in Merrifield, 1963.

**Protein purification** refers to various methods for the isolation of the BRCA1 polypeptides from other biological material, such as from cells transformed with recombinant nucleic acids encoding BRCA1, and are well known in the
art. For example, such polypeptides may be purified by immuno-affinity chromatography employing, e.g., the antibodies provided by the present invention. Various methods of protein purification are well known in the art, and include those described in Deutscher, 1990 and Scopes, 1982.

The terms "isolated", "substantially pure", and "substantially homogeneous" are used interchangeably to describe a protein or polypeptide which has been separated from components which accompany it in its natural state. A monomeric protein is substantially pure when at least about 60 to 75% of a sample exhibits a single polypeptide sequence. A substantially pure protein will typically comprise about 50 to 90% WW of a protein sample, more usually about 95%, and preferably will be over about 99% pure. Protein purity or homogeneity may be indicated by a number of means well known in the art, such as polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis of a protein sample, followed by visualizing a single polypeptide band upon staining the gel. For certain purposes, higher resolution may be provided by using HPLC or other means well known in the art which are utilized for purification.

A BRCA1 protein is substantially free of naturally associated components when it is separated from the native contaminants which accompany it in its natural state. Thus, a polypeptide which is chemically synthesized or synthesized in a cellular system different from the cell from which it naturally originates will be substantially free from its naturally associated components. A protein may also be rendered substantially free of naturally associated components by isolation, using protein purification techniques well known in the art.

A polypeptide produced as an expression product of an isolated and manipulated genetic sequence is an "isolated polypeptide," as used herein, even if expressed in a homologous cell type. Synthetically made forms or molecules expressed by heterologous cells are inherently isolated molecules.

"Recombinant nucleic acid" is a nucleic acid which is not naturally occurring, or which is made by the artificial combination of two otherwise separated segments of sequence. This artificial combination is often accomplished by either chemical synthesis means, or by the artificial manipulation of isolated segments of nucleic acids, e.g., by genetic engineering techniques. Such is usually done to replace a codon with a redundant codon encoding the same or a conservative amino acid, while typically introducing or removing a sequence recognition site. Alternatively, it is performed to join together nucleic acid segments of desired functions to generate a desired combination of functions.

"Regulatory sequences" refers to those sequences normally within 100 kb of the coding region of a locus, but they may also be more distant from the coding region, which affect the expression of the gene (including transcription of the gene, and translation, splicing, stability or the like of the messenger RNA).

"Substantial homology or similarity". A nucleic acid or fragment thereof is "substantially homologous" (or substantially similar) to another if, when optimally aligned (with appropriate nucleotide insertions or deletions) with the other nucleic acid (or its complementary strand), there is nucleotide sequence identity in at least about 60% of the nucleotide bases, usually at least about 70%, more usually at least about 80%, preferably at least about 90%, and more preferably at least about 95-98% of the nucleotide bases.

Alternatively, substantial homology (or similarity) exists when a nucleic acid or fragment thereof will hybridize to another nucleic acid (or a complementary strand thereof) under selective hybridization conditions, to a strand, or to its complement. Selectivity of hybridization exists when hybridization which is substantially more selective than total lack of specificity occurs. Typically, selective hybridization will occur when there is at least about 55% homology over a stretch of at least about 14 nucleotides, preferably at least about 65%, more preferably at least about 75%, and most preferably at least about 90%. See, Kanehisa, 1984. The length of homology comparison, as described, may be over longer stretches, and in certain embodiments will often be over a stretch of at least about nine nucleotides, usually at least about 20 nucleotides, more usually at least about 24 nucleotides, typically at least about 28 nucleotides, more typically at least about 32 nucleotides, and preferably at least about 36 or more nucleotides.

Nucleic acid hybridization will be affected by such conditions as salt concentration, temperature, or organic solvents, in addition to the base composition, length of the complementary strands, and the number of nucleotide base mismatches between the hybridizing nucleic acids, as will be readily appreciated by those skilled in the art. Stringent temperature conditions will generally include temperatures in excess of 30°C, typically in excess of 37°C, and preferably in excess of 48°C. Stringent salt conditions will ordinarily be less than 1000 mM, typically less than 500 mM, and preferably less than 200 mM. However, the combination of parameters is much more important than the measure of any single parameter. See, e.g., Wetmur & Davidson, 1968.

Probe sequences may also hybridize specifically to duplex DNA under certain conditions to form triplex or other higher order DNA complexes. The preparation of such probes and suitable hybridization conditions are well known in the art.

The terms "substantial homology" or "substantial identity", when referring to polypeptides, indicate that the polypeptide or protein in question exhibits at least about 30% identity with an entire naturally-occurring protein or a portion thereof, usually at least about 70% identity, and preferably at least about 95% identity.

"Substantially similar function" refers to the function of a modified nucleic acid or a modified protein, with reference to the wild-type BRCA1 nucleic acid or wild-type BRCA1 polypeptide. The modified polypeptide will be substantially homologous to the wild-type BRCA1 polypeptide and will have substantially the same function. The modified
polypeptide may have an altered amino acid sequence and/or may contain modified amino acids. In addition to the similarity of function, the modified polypeptide may have other useful properties, such as a longer half-life. The similarity of function (activity) of the modified polypeptide may be substantially the same as the activity of the wild-type BRC-A1 polypeptide. Alternatively, the similarity of function (activity) of the modified polypeptide may be higher than the activity of the wild-type BRC-A1 polypeptide. The modified polypeptide is synthesized using conventional techniques, or is encoded by a modified nucleic acid and produced using conventional techniques. The modified nucleic acid is prepared by conventional techniques. A nucleic acid with a function substantially similar to the wild-type BRC-A1 gene function produces the modified protein described above.

Homology, for polypeptides, is typically measured using sequence analysis software. See, e.g., the Sequence Analysis Software Package of the Genetics Computer Group, University of Wisconsin Biotechnology Center, 910 University Avenue, Madison, Wisconsin 53705. Protein analysis software matches similar sequences using measures of homology assigned to various substitutions, deletions and other modifications. Conservative substitutions typically include substitutions within the following groups: glycine, alanine, valine, isoleucine, leucine; aspartic acid, glutamic acid, asparagine, glutamine; serine, threonine, lysine, arginine; and phenylalanine, tyrosine.

A polypeptide "fragment," "portion" or "segment" is a stretch of amino acid residues of at least about five to seven contiguous amino acids, often at least about seven to nine contiguous amino acids, typically at least about nine to 13 contiguous amino acids and, most preferably, at least about 20 to 30 or more contiguous amino acids.

The polypeptides of the present invention, if soluble, may be coupled to a solid-phase support, e.g., nitrocellulose, nylon, column packing materials (e.g., Sepharose beads), magnetic beads, glass wool, plastic, metal, polymer gels, cells, or other substrates. Such supports may take the form, for example, of beads, wells, chips, or membranes.

"Target region" refers to a region of the nucleic acid which is amplified under various conditions. The term "target sequence" refers to a sequence with which a probe or primer will form a stable hybrid under desired conditions.

The practice of the present invention employs, unless otherwise indicated, conventional techniques of chemistry, molecular biology, microbiology, recombinant DNA, genetics, and immunology. See, e.g., Maniatis et al., 1982; Sambrook et al., 1989, Ausubel et al., 1992; Glover, 1985; Anzett, 1992; Guthrie & Fink, 1991. A general discussion of techniques and materials for genetic manipulation, including mapping of human chromosomes 17q, is provided, e.g., in White andaltimore, 1988.

Preparation of recombinant or chemically synthesized nucleic acids: vectors, transformation, host cells

Large amounts of the polynucleotides of the present invention may be produced by replication in a suitable host cell. Natural or synthetic polynucleotide fragments coding for a desired fragment will be incorporated into recombinant polynucleotide constructs, usually DNA constructs, capable of introduction into and replication in a prokaryotic or eukaryotic cell. Usually the polynucleotide constructs will be suitable for replication in a unicellular host, such as yeast or bacteria, but may also be intended for introduction into (with or without integration within the genome) cultured mammalian or plant or other eukaryotic cell lines. The purification of nucleic acids produced by the methods of the present invention is described, e.g., in Sambrook et al., 1989 or Ausubel et al., 1992.

The polynucleotides of the present invention may also be produced by chemical synthesis, e.g., by the phosphoramidite method described by Beaucage & Caruthers, 1981 or the triester method according to Matoush and Caruthers, 1981, and may be performed on commercial, automated oligonucleotide synthesizers. A double-stranded fragment may be obtained from the single-stranded product of chemical synthesis either by synthesizing the complementary strand and annealing the strands together under appropriate conditions or by adding the complementary strand using DNA polymerase with an appropriate primer sequence.

Polynucleotide constructs prepared for introduction into a prokaryotic or eukaryotic host may comprise a replication system recognized by the host, including the intended polynucleotide fragment encoding the desired polypeptide, and will preferably include transcription and translational initiation regulatory sequences operably linked to the polynucleotide encoding segment. Expression vectors may include, for example, an origin of replication or autonomously replicating sequence (ARS) and expression control sequences, a promoter, an enhancer and necessary processing information sites, such as ribosome-binding sites, RNA splice sites, polyadenylation sites, transcriptional terminator sequences, and mRNA stabilizing sequences. Selection signals may also be included where appropriate, whether from a native BRC-A1 protein or from other receptors or from secreted polypeptides of the same or related species, which allow the protein to cross and/or lodge in cell membranes, and thus attain its functional topology, or be secreted from the cell. Such vectors may be prepared by means of standard recombinant techniques well known in the art and discussed, for example, in Sambrook et al., 1989 or Ausubel et al., 1992.

An appropriate promoter and other necessary vector sequences will be selected so as to be functional in the host, and may include, when appropriate, those naturally associated with BRC-A1 genes. Examples of workable combinations of cell lines and expression vectors are described in Sambrook et al., 1989 or Ausubel et al., 1992; see also, e.g., Metzger et al., 1988. Many useful vectors are known in the art and may be obtained from such vendors as Stratagene,
New England BioLabs, Promega Biotech, and others. Promoters such as the trp, lac and phage promoters, tRNA promoters and glycolytic enzyme promoters may be used in prokaryotic hosts. Useful yeast promoters include promoter regions for metallothionein, 3-phosphoglycerate kinase or other glycolytic enzymes such as enolase or glyceraldehyde-3-phosphate dehydrogenase, enzymes responsible for maltose and galactose utilization, and others. Vectors and promoters suitable for use in yeast expression are further described in Hilzeman et al., EP 73,673A. Appropriate native mammalian promoters might include the early and late promoters from SV40 (Flack et al, 1975) or promoters derived from murine Moloney leukemia virus, mouse tumor virus, avian sarcoma virus, adenovirus II, bovine papilloma virus or polyoma. In addition, the construct may be joined to an amplifiable gene (e.g., DHFR) so that multiple copies of the gene may be made. For appropriate enhancer and other expression control sequences, see also Enhancers and Eukaryotic Gene Expression, Cold Spring Harbor Press, Cold Spring Harbor, New York (1983).

While such expression vectors may replicate autonomously, they may also replicate by being inserted into the genome of the host cell, by methods well known in the art.

Expression and cloning vectors will likely contain a selectable marker, a gene encoding a protein necessary for survival or growth of a host cell transformed with the vector. The presence of this gene ensures growth of only those host cells which express the insert. Typical selection genes encode proteins that a) confer resistance to antibiotics or other toxic substances, e.g., ampicillin, neomycin, methotrexate, etc.; b) complement auxotrophic deficiencies, or c) supply critical nutrients not available from complex media, e.g., the gene encoding D-alanine racemase for Bacilli. The choice of the proper selectable marker will depend on the host cell, and appropriate markers for different hosts are well known in the art.

The vectors containing the nucleic acids of interest can be transcribed in vitro, and the resulting RNA introduced into the host cell by well-known methods, e.g., by injection (see, Kubo et al, 1988), or the vectors can be introduced directly into host cells by methods well known in the art, which vary depending on the type of cellular host, including electroporation; transfection employing calcium chloride, rubidium chloride, calcium phosphate, DEAE-dextran, or other substances; microprojectile bombardment; infection (where the vector is an infectious agent, such as a retroviral genome); and other methods. See generally, Samorook et al., 1989 and Ausubel et al., 1992. The introduction of the polynucleotides into the host cell by any method known in the art, including, inter alia, those described above, will be referred to herein as "transformation." The cell into which have been introduced nucleic acids described above are meant to also include the progeny of such cells.

Large quantities of the nucleic acids and polypeptides of the present invention may be prepared by expressing the BRCA1 nucleic acids or portions thereof in vectors or other expression vehicles in compatible prokaryotic or eukaryotic host cells. The most commonly used prokaryotic hosts are strains of Escherichia coli, although other prokaryotes, such as Bacillus subtilis or Pseudomonas may also be used.

Mammalian or other eukaryotic host cells, such as those of yeast, filamentous fungi, plant, insect, or amphibian or avian species, may also be used for production of the proteins of the present invention. Propagation of mammalian cells in culture is as well known. See, Jacoby and Pasten, 1979. Examples of commonly used mammalian host cell lines are VERO and HeLa cells, Chinese hamster ovary (CHO) cells, and WI38, BHK, and COS cell lines, although it will be appreciated by the skilled practitioner that other cell lines may be appropriate, e.g., to provide higher expression, desirable glycosylation patterns, or other features.

Clones are selected by using markers depending on the mode of the vector construction. The marker may be on the same or a different DNA molecules, preferably the same DNA molecules, in prokaryotic hosts, the transformant may be selected, e.g., by resistance to ampicillin, tetracycline or other antibiotics. Production of a particular product based on temperature sensitivity may also serve as an appropriate marker.

Prokaryotic or eukaryotic cells transformed with the polynucleotides of the present invention will be useful not only for the production of the nucleic acids and polypeptides of the present invention, but also, for example, in studying the characteristics of BRCA1 polypeptides.

Antisense polynucleotide sequences are useful in preventing or diminishing the expression of the BRCA1 locus, as will be appreciated by those skilled in the art. For example, polynucleotide vectors containing all or a portion of the BRCA1 locus or other sequences from the BRCA1 region (particularly those flanking the BRCA1 locus) may be placed under the control of a promoter in an antisense orientation and introduced into a cell. Expression of such an antisense construct within a cell will interfere with BRCA1 transcription and/or translation and/or replication.

The probes and primers based on the BRCA1 gene sequences disclosed herein are used to identify homologous BRCA1 gene sequences and proteins in other species. Those BRCA1 gene sequences and proteins are used in the diagnostic/prognostic, therapeutic and drug screening methods described herein for the species from which they have been isolated.

Methods of Use: Nucleic Acid Diagnosis and Diagnostic Kits

In order to detect the presence of a BRCA1 allele predisposing an individual to cancer, a biological sample such as
blood is prepared and analyzed for the presence or absence of susceptibility alleles of BRCA1. In order to detect the presence of neoplasia, the progression toward malignancy of a precursor lesion, or as a diagnostic indicator, a biological sample of the lesion is prepared and analyzed for the presence or absence of mutant alleles of BRCA1. Results of these tests and interpretative information are returned to the health care provider for communication to the tested individual. Such diagnoses may be performed by diagnostic laboratories, or, alternatively, diagnostic kits are manufactured and sold to health care providers or to private individuals for self-diagnosis.

Initially, the screening method involves amplification of the relevant BRCA1 sequences. In another preferred embodiment of the invention, the screening method involves a non-PCR based strategy. Such screening methods include two-step label amplification methodologies that are well known in the art. Both PCR and non-PCR based screening strategies can detect target sequences with a high level of sensitivity.

The most popular method used today is target amplification. Here, the target nucleic acid sequence is amplified with polymerases. One particularly preferred method using polymerase-driven amplification is the polymerase chain reaction (PCR). The polymerase chain reaction and other polymerase-driven amplification assays can achieve over a million-fold increase in copy number through the use of polymerase-driven amplification cycles. Once amplified, the resulting nucleic acid can be sequenced or used as a substrate for DNA probes.

When the probes are used to detect the presence of the target sequences (for example, in screening for cancer susceptibility), the biological sample must be analyzed, such as blood or serum, may be treated, if desired, to extract the nucleic acids. The sample nucleic acid may be prepared in various ways to facilitate detection of the target sequence, e.g. denaturation, restriction digestion, electrophoresis or dot blotting. The targeted region of the analyte nucleic acid usually must be at least partially single-stranded to form hybrids with the targetting sequence of the probe. If the sequence is naturally single-stranded, denaturation will not be required. However, if the sequence is double-stranded, the sequence will probably need to be denatured. Denaturation can be carried out by various techniques known in the art.

Analyte nucleic acid and probe are incubated under conditions which promote stable hybrid formation of the target sequence in the probe with the putative targeted sequence in the analyte. The region of the probe which is used to bind to the analyte can be made completely complementary to the targeted region of human chromosome 17q. Therefore, high stringency conditions are desirable in order to prevent false positives. However, conditions of high stringency are used only if the probes are complementary to regions of the chromosome which are unique in the genome. The stringency of hybridization is determined by a number of factors during hybridization and during the washing procedure, including temperature, ionic strength, base composition, probe length, and concentration of formamide. These factors are outlined in, for example, Maniatis et al., 1982 and Sambrook et al., 1989. Under certain circumstances, the formation of higher order hybrids, such as triplexes, quadruplexes, etc., may be desired to provide the means of detecting target sequences.

Detection, if any, of the resulting hybrid is usually accomplished by the use of labeled probes. Alternatively, the probe may be unlabeled, but may be detectable by specific binding with a ligand which is labeled, either directly or indirectly. Suitable labels, and methods for labeling probes and ligands are known in the art, and include, for example, radioactive labels which may be incorporated by known methods (e.g., nick translation, random priming or cloning), biotin, fluorescent groups, chemiluminescent groups (e.g., diolates, particularly triggered diolates), enzymes, antibodies and the like. Variations of this basic scheme are known in the art, and include those variations that facilitate separation of the hybrids to be detected from extraneous materials and/or that amplify the signal from the labeled moiety. A number of these variations are reviewed in, e.g., Matthew & Kricka, 1998; Landegren et al., 1988; Miltin, 1989; U.S. Patent 4,663,105, and in EPO Publication No. 225,607.

As noted above, non-PCR based screening assays are also contemplated in this invention. An exemplary non-PCR based procedure is provided in Example 11. This procedure hybridizes a nucleic acid probe (or an analog such as a methyl phosphonate backbone replacing the normal phosphodiesters), to the low level DNA target. This probe may have an enzyme covalently linked to the probe, such that the covalent linkage does not interfere with the specificity of the hybridization. This enzyme probe-conjugate-target nucleic acid complex can then be isolated away from the free probe enzyme conjugate and a substrate is added for enzyme detection. Enzymatic activity is observed as a change in color development or luminescent output resulting in a 10² to 10⁵ increase in sensitivity. For an example relating to the preparation of oligodeoxynucleotide-alkaline phosphatase conjugates and their use as hybridization probes see Jablonski et al., 1996.

Two-step label amplification methodologies are known in the art. Those assays work on the principle that a small ligand (such as digoxigenin, biotin, or the like) is attached to a nucleic acid probe capable of specifically binding BRCA1. Exemplary probes are provided in Table 9 of this patent application and additionally include the nucleic acid probe corresponding to nucleotide positions 3631 to 3930 of SEQ ID NO:1. Allele specific probes are also contemplated within the scope of this example, and exemplary allele specific probes include probes encompassing the predisposing mutations summarized in Tables 11 and 12 of this patent application.

In one example, the small ligand attached to the nucleic acid probe is specifically recognized by an antibody-enzyme conjugate. In one embodiment of this example, digoxigenin is attached to the nucleic acid probe. Hybridization is detected by an antibody-alkaline phosphatase conjugate which turns over a chemiluminescent substrate. For methods for labeling
nucleic acid probes according to this embodiment see Martin et al., 1990. In a second example, the small ligand is recognized by a second ligand-enzyme conjugate that is capable of specifically complexing to the first ligand. A well known embodiment of this example is the biotin-avidin type of interactions. For methods for labeling nucleic acid probes and their use in biotin-avidin based assays see Pigot et al., 1977 and Nguyen et al., 1982.

It is also contemplated within the scope of this invention that the nucleic acid probe assays of this invention will employ a cocktail of nucleic acid probes capable of detecting BRCA1. Thus, in one example to detect the presence of BRCA1 in a cell sample, more than one probe complementary to BRCA1 is employed and in particular the number of different probes is alternatively 2, 3, or 5 different nucleic acid probe sequences. In another example, to detect the presence of mutations in the BRCA1 gene sequence in a patient, more than one probe complementary to BRCA1 is employed where the cocktail includes probes capable of binding to the allele-specific mutations identified in populations of patients with alterations in BRCA1. In this embodiment, any number of probes can be used, and will preferably include probes corresponding to the major gene mutations identified as predisposing an individual to breast cancer. Some candidate probes contemplated within the scope of this invention include probes that include the allele-specific mutations identified in Tables 11 and 12 and those that have the BRCA1 regions corresponding to SEQ ID NO: 1 both 5’ and 3’ to the mutation site.

Methods of Use: Peptide Diagnosis and Diagnostic Kits

The neoplastic condition of lesions can also be detected on the basis of the alteration of wild-type BRCA1 polypeptide. Such alterations can be determined by sequence analysis in accordance with conventional techniques. More preferably, antibodies (polyclonal or monoclonal) are used to detect differences in, or the absence of BRCA1 peptides. The antibodies may be prepared as discussed above under the heading “Antibodies” and as further shown in Examples 12 and 13. Other techniques for raising and purifying antibodies are well known in the art and any such techniques may be chosen to achieve the preparations claimed in this invention. In a preferred embodiment of the invention, antibodies will immunoprecipitate BRCA1 proteins from solution as well as react with BRCA1 protein on Western or immunoblots of polyacrylamide gels. In another preferred embodiment, antibodies will detect BRCA1 proteins in paraffin or frozen tissue sections, using immunocytochemical techniques.

Preferred embodiments relating to methods for detecting BRCA1 or its mutations include enzyme linked immunosorbent assays (ELISA), radioimmunoassays (RIA), immunosorbent assays (IRMA) and immunoenzymatic assays (IEMA), including sandwich assays using monoclonal and/or polyclonal antibodies. Exemplary sandwich assays are described by David et al. in U.S. Patent Nos. 4,376,110 and 4,486,530, hereby incorporated by reference, and exemplified in Example 14.

Methods of Use: Drug Screening

This invention is particularly useful for screening compounds by using the BRCA1 polypeptide or binding fragment thereof in any of a variety of drug screening techniques.

The BRCA1 polypeptide or fragment employed in such a test may either be free in solution, affixed to a solid support, or borne on a cell surface. One method of drug screening utilizes eucaryotic or procaryotic host cells which are stably transformed with recombinant polynucleotides expressing the polypeptide or fragment, preferably in competitive binding assays. Such cells, either in viable or fixed form, can be used for standard binding assays. One may measure, for example, the formation of complexes between a BRCA1 polypeptide or fragment and the agent being tested, or examine the degree to which the formation of a complex between a BRCA1 polypeptide or fragment and a known ligand is interfered with by the agent tested.

Thus, the present invention provides methods of screening for drugs comprising contacting such an agent with a BRCA1 polypeptide or fragment thereof and assaying (i) for the presence of a complex between the agent and the BRCA1 polypeptide or fragment, or (ii) for the presence of a complex between the BRCA1 polypeptide or fragment and a ligand, by methods well known in the art. In such competitive binding assays the BRCA1 polypeptide or fragment is typically labeled. Free BRCA1 polypeptide or fragment is separated from that present in a protein-protein complex, and the amount of free (i.e., uncomplexed) label is a measure of the binding of the agent being tested to BRCA1 or its interference with BRCA1:ligand binding, respectively.

Another technique for drug screening provides high throughput screening for compounds having suitable binding affinity to the BRCA1 polypeptides and is described in detail in Geyser, PCT published application WO 84/03564, published on September 13, 1984. Briefly stated, large numbers of different small peptide test compounds are synthesized on a solid substrate, such as plastic pins or some other surface. The peptide test compounds are reacted with BRCA1 polypeptide and washed. Bound BRCA1 polypeptide is then detected by methods well known in the art.

Purified BRCA1 can be coated directly onto plates for use in the aforementioned drug screening techniques. However, non-neutralizing antibodies to the polypeptide can be used to capture antibodies to immobilize the BRCA1 polypep-
This invention also contemplates the use of competitive drug screening assays in which neutralizing antibodies capable of specifically binding the BRCA1 polypeptide compete with a test compound for binding to the BRCA1 polypeptide or fragments thereof. In this manner, the antibodies can be used to detect the presence of any peptide which shares one or more antigenic determinants of the BRCA1 polypeptide.

A further technique for drug screening involves the use of host eukaryotic cell lines or cells (such as described above) which have a nonfunctional BRCA1 gene. These host cell lines or cells are defective at the BRCA1 polypeptide level. The host cell lines or cells are grown in the presence of drug compound. The rate of growth of the host cells is measured to determine if the compound is capable of regulating the growth of BRCA1 defective cells.

Methods of Use: Rational Drug Design

The goal of rational drug design is to produce structural analogs of biologically active polypeptides of interest or of small molecules with which they interact (e.g., agonists, antagonists, inhibitors) in order to fashion drugs which are, for example, more active or stable forms of the polypeptide, or which, e.g., enhance or interfere with the function of a polypeptide in vivo. See, e.g., Hodgson, 1991. In one approach, one first determines the three-dimensional structure of a protein of interest (e.g., BRCA1 polypeptide) or, for example, of the BRCA1-receptor or ligand complex, by X-ray crystallography, by computer modeling or most typically, by a combination of approaches. Less often, useful information regarding the structure of a polypeptide may be gained by modeling based on the structure of homologous proteins. An example of rational drug design is the development of HIV protease inhibitors (Erckson et al., 1999). In addition, peptides (e.g., BRCA1 polypeptide) are analyzed by an allelic scan (Wells, 1991). In this technique, an amino acid residue is replaced by Ala, and its effect on the peptide's activity is determined. Each of the amino acid residues of the peptide is analyzed in this manner to determine the important regions of the peptide.

It is also possible to isolate a target-specific antibody, selected by a functional assay, and then to solve its crystal structure. In principle, this approach yields a pharmacopea upon which subsequent drug design can be based. It is possible to bypass protein crystallography altogether by generating anti-idiotypic antibodies (anti-ids) to a functional, pharmacologically active antibody. As a mirror image of a mirror image, the binding site of the anti-ids would be expected to be an analog of the original receptor. The anti-id could then be used to identify and isolate peptides from banks of chemically or biologically produced banks of peptides. Selected peptides would then act as the pharmacome.

Thus, one may design drugs which have, e.g., improved BRCA1 polypeptide activity or stability or which act as inhibitors, agonists, antagonists, etc. of BRCA1 polypeptide activity. By virtue of the availability of cloned BRCA1 sequences, sufficient amounts of the BRCA1 polypeptide may be made available to perform such analytical studies as X-ray crystallography. In addition, the knowledge of the BRCA1 protein sequence provided herein will guide those employing computer modeling techniques in place of, or in addition to, X-ray crystallography.

Methods of Use: Gene Therapy

According to the present invention, a method is also provided for supplying wild-type BRCA1 function to a cell which carries mutant BRCA1 alleles. Supplying such a function should suppress neoplastic growth of the recipient cell's. The wild-type BRCA1 gene or a part of the gene may be introduced into the cell in a vector such that the gene remains extrachromosomal. In such a situation, the gene will be expressed by the cell from the extrachromosomal location. If a gene fragment is introduced and expressed in a cell carrying a mutant BRCA1 allele, the gene fragment should encode a part of the BRCA1 protein which is required for non-neoplastic growth of the cell. More preferred is the situation where the wild-type BRCA1 gene or a part thereof is introduced into the mutant cell in such a way that it recombines with the endogenous mutant BRCA1 gene present in the cell. Such recombination requires a double recombination event which results in the correction of the BRCA1 gene mutation. Vectors for introduction of genes both for recombination and for extrachromosomal maintenance are known in the art, and any suitable vector may be used. Methods for introducing DNA into cells such as electroporation, calcium phosphate co-precipitation and viral transduction are known in the art, and the choice of method is within the competence of the routine worker. Cells transformed with the wild-type BRCA1 gene can be used as model systems to study cancer remission and drug treatments which promote such remission.

As generally discussed above, the BRCA1 gene or fragment, where applicable, may be employed in gene therapy methods in order to increase the amount of the expression products of such genes in cancer cells. Such gene therapy is particularly appropriate for use in both cancerous and precancerous cells, in which the level of BRCA1 polypeptide is absent or diminished compared to normal cells. It may also be useful to increase the level of expression of a given BRCA1 gene even in those tumor cells in which the mutant gene is expressed at a "normal" level, but the gene product is not fully functional.

Gene therapy would be carried out according to generally accepted methods, for example, as described by Friedman, 1991. Cells from a patient's tumor would be first analyzed by the diagnostic methods described above, to ascertain
the production of BRCA1 polypeptide in the tumor cells. A virus or plasmid vector (see further details below), containing a copy of the BRCA1 gene linked to expression control elements and capable of replication inside the tumor cells, is prepared. Suitable vectors are known, such as disclosed in U.S. Patent 5,222,479 and PCT published application WO 93/07202. The vector is then injected into the patient, either locally at the site of the tumor or systemically (in order to reach any tumor cells that may have metastasized to other areas). If the transfected gene is not permanently incorporated into the genome of each of the targeted tumor cells, the treatment may have to be repeated periodically.

Gene transfer systems known in the art may be useful in the practice of the gene therapy methods of the present invention. These include viral and nonviral transfer methods. A number of viruses have been used as gene transfer vectors, including papovaviruses, e.g., SV40 (Mozzak et al., 1992), adenovirus (Berkner, 1992; Berkner et al., 1998; Gorzikh and Kaplak, 1992; Quintin et al., 1992; Rosenfeld et al., 1992; Wilkinson et al., 1992; Stratford-Perricaudet et al., 1990), vaccinia virus (Voss, 1992), adeno-associated virus (Muzyczka, 1992; Ghi et al., 1990), herpesviruses including HSV and EBV (Margolis, 1992; Johnson et al., 1992; Finke et al., 1992; Breakfield and Geller, 1987; Freese et al., 1990), and retroviruses of avian (Brandyopschuy and Temin, 1984; Petropoulos et al., 1992), murine (Miller, 1992; Miller and Baltimore, 1992; Miller et al., 1988) and human origin (Shimada et al., 1991; Halvson et al., 1990; Page et al., 1990; Buchescher and Panganiban, 1992). Most human gene therapy protocols have been based on disabled murine retroviruses.

Nonviral gene transfer methods known in the art include chemical techniques such as calcium phosphate coprecipitation (Graham and van der Eb, 1973; Pellicer et al., 1983); mechanical techniques, for example microinjection (Anderson et al., 1980; Gordon et al., 1980; Brinster et al., 1981; Constantini and Lacy, 1991); and liposome- or polymer-mediated transfer (Feldler et al., 1997; Wang and Huang, 1999; Kabeda et al., 1992; Nebel et al., 1990; Lim et al., 1992), and direct DNA uptake and receptor-mediated DNA transfer (Wolff et al., 1990; Wu et al., 1991; Zenke et al., 1990; Wu et al., 1998): Wolff et al., 1991; Wagner et al., 1990; Wagner et al., 1991; in vivo gene transfer using liposome delivery, allowing one to direct the viral vectors to the tumor cells and not into the surrounding normal cells. Alternatively, the retroviral vector producer cell line can be injected into tumors (Culver et al., 1992). Injection of producer cells would then provide a continuous source of vector particles. This has been approved for use in humans with inoperable brain tumors.

In an approach which combines biological and physical gene transfer methods, plasmid DNA of any size is combined with a polycationic-conjugated antibody specific to the adenovirus hexon protein, and the resulting complex is bound to an adenovirus vector. The trimolecular complex is then used to infect cells. The adenovirus vector permits efficient binding, internalization, and degradation of the complex before the coupled DNA is damaged.

Liposome/DNA complexes have been shown to be capable of delivering direct in vivo gene transfer. While in standard liposome preparations the gene transfer process is non-specific, localization in vivo uptake and expression have been reported in tumor deposits, for example, following direct in situ administration (Nebel, 1992).

Gene transfer techniques which target DNA directly to breast and ovarian tissues, e.g., epithelial cells of the breast or ovaries, is preferred. Receptor-mediated gene transfer, for example, is accomplished by the conjugation of DNA (usually in the form of covalently closed supercoiled plasmid) to a protein ligand via polylysine. Ligands are chosen on the basis of the presence of the corresponding ligand receptors on the cell surface of the target cell/tissue type. One appropriate receptor/ligand pair may include the estrogen receptor and its ligand, estrogen (and estrogen analogues).

These ligand-DNA conjugates can be injected directly into the blood vessels and are directed to the target tissue where receptor binding and internalization of the DNA-protein complex occurs. To overcome the problem of intracellular degradation of DNA, covalent linkage with adenovirus can be included to disrupt endosome function.

The therapy involves two steps which can be performed singly or jointly. In the first step, postpubescent females who carry the BRCA1 susceptibility allele are treated with a gene delivery vehicle such that some or all of their mammary ductal epithelial precursor cells receive at least one additional copy of a functional normal BRCA1 allele. In this step, the treated individuals have reduced risk of breast cancer to the extent that the effect of the susceptible allele has been countered by the presence of the normal allele. In the second step of a preventive therapy, predisposed young females, in particular women who have received the proposed gene therapeutic treatment, undergo hormonal therapy to mimic the effects on the breast of a full term pregnancy.

Methods of Use: Peptide Therapy

Peptides which have BRCA1 activity can be supplied to cells which carry mutant or missing BRCA1 alleles. The sequence of the BRCA1 protein is disclosed (SEQ ID NO:2). Protein can be produced by expression of the cDNA sequence in bacteria, for example, using known expression vectors. Alternatively, BRCA1 polypeptide can be extracted from BRCA1-producing mammalian cells. In addition, the techniques of synthetic chemistry can be employed to synthesize BRCA1 protein. Any of such techniques can provide the preparation of the present invention which comprises the BRCA1 protein. The preparation is substantially free of other human proteins. This is most readily accomplished by
synthesis in a microorganism or in vitro.

Active BRCA1 molecules can be introduced into cells by microinjection or by use of liposomes, for example. Alternatively, some active molecules may be taken up by cells, actively or by diffusion. Extracellular application of the BRCA1 gene product may be sufficient to affect tumor growth. Supply of molecules with BRCA1 activity should lead to partial reversal of the neoplastic state. Other molecules with BRCA1 activity (for example, peptides, drugs or organic compounds) may also be used to effect such a reversal. Modified polypeptides having substantially similar function are also used for peptide therapy.

Methods of Use: Transformed Hosts

Similarly, cells and animals which carry a mutant BRCA1 allele can be used as model systems to study and test for substances which have potential as therapeutic agents. The cells are typically cultured epithelial cells. These may be isolated from individuals with BRCA1 mutations, either somatic or germine. Alternatively, the cell line can be engineered to carry the mutation in the BRCA1 allele, as described above. After a test substance is applied to the cells, the neoplastically transformed phenotype of the cell is determined. Any trait of neoplastically transformed cells can be assessed, including anchorage-independent growth, tumorigenicity in nude mice, invasiveness of cells, and growth factor dependence. Assays for each of these traits are known in the art.

Animals for testing therapeutic agents can be selected after mutagenesis of whole animals or after treatment of germine cells or zygotes. Such treatments include insertion of mutant BRCA1 alleles, usually from a second animal species, as well as insertion of disrupted homologous genes. Alternatively, the endogenous BRCA1 gene(s) of the animal may be disrupted by insertion or deletion mutation or other genetic alterations using conventional techniques (Caplan et al., 1989; Valsancueva and Smithies, 1991; Hasty et al., 1991; Shinkai et al., 1992; Mombaerts et al., 1992; Philpott et al., 1992; Snauwaert et al., 1992; Donehower et al., 1992). After test substances have been administered to the animals, the growth of tumors must be assessed. If the test substance prevents or suppresses the growth of tumors, then the test substance is a candidate therapeutic agent for the treatment of the cancers identified herein. These animal models provide an extremely important testing vehicle for potential therapeutic products.

The present invention is described by reference to the following Examples, which are offered by way of illustration and are not intended to limit the invention in any manner. Standard techniques well known in the art or the techniques specifically described below were utilized.

EXAMPLE 1

Ascertain and Study Kindreds Likely to Have a 17q-Linked Breast Cancer Susceptibility Locus

Extensive cancer prone kindreds were ascertained from a defined population providing a large set of extended kindreds with multiple cases of breast cancer and many relatives available to study. The large number of meioses present in these large kindreds provided the power to detect whether the BRCA1 locus was segregating, and increased the opportunity for informative recombination to occur within the small region being investigated. This vastly improved the chances of establishing linkage to the BRCA1 region, and greatly facilitated the reduction of the BRCA1 region to a manageable size, which permits identification of the BRCA1 locus itself.

Each kindred was extended through all available connecting relatives, and to all informative first degree relatives of each proband or cancer case. For these kindreds, additional breast cancer cases and individuals with cancer at other sites of interest (e.g. ovarian) who also appeared in the kindreds were identified through the tumor registry linked files. All breast cancers reported in the kindreds which were not confirmed in the Utah Cancer Registry were researched. Medical records or death certificates were obtained for confirmation of all cancers. Each key connecting individual and all informative individuals were invited to participate by providing a blood sample from which DNA was extracted. We also sampled spouses and relatives of deceased cases so that the genotype of the deceased cases could be inferred from the genotypes of their relatives.

Ten kindreds which had three or more cancer cases with inheritable genotypes were selected for linkage studies to 17q markers from a set of 29 kindreds originally ascertained from the linked databases for a study of proliferative breast disease and breast cancer (Skolnick et al., 1990). The criterion for selection of these kindreds was the presence of two sisters or a mother and her daughter with breast cancer. Additionally, two kindreds which have been studied since 1980 as part of the breast cancer linkage studies (K1001, K5016), six kindreds ascertained from the linked databases for the presence of clusters of breast and/or ovarian cancer (K2019, K2073, K2079, K2080, K2039, K2032) and a self-referred kindred with early onset breast cancer (K2035) were included. These kindreds were investigated and expanded in our clinic in the manner described above. Table 1 displays the characteristics of these 19 kindreds which are the subject of subsequent examples. In Table 1, for each kindred the total number of individuals in our database, the number of typed individuals, and the minimum, median, and maximum age at diagnosis of breast/ovarian cancer are reported. Kindreds
### TABLE 1

**Description of the 19 Kindreds**

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<td>75</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Indicates one case of male breast cancer.
EXAMPLE 2

Selection of Kindreds Which are Linked to Chromosome 17q and Localization of BRCA1 to the Interval Mld15-Mld188

For each sample collected in these 19 kindreds, DNA was extracted from blood (or in two cases from paraffin-embedded tissue blocks) using standard laboratory protocols. Genotyping in this study was restricted to short tandem repeat (STR) markers, since, in general, they have high heterozygosity and PCR methods offer rapid turnaround while using very small amounts of DNA. To aid in this effort, four such STR markers on chromosome 17 were developed by screening a chromosome specific cosmid library for CA positive clones. Three of these markers localized to the long arm (X68, Easton et al., 1993), (X2D6, Easton et al., 1993); 25C2 (X17S514, Oliphant et al., 1991), while the other, 125G (X17S513, Oliphant et al., 1991), localized to the short arm near the p53 tumor suppressor locus. Two of these, X2D6 and X68, were submitted to the Breast Cancer Linkage Consortium for typing of breast cancer families by investigators worldwide. Oligonucleotide sequences for markers not developed in our laboratory were obtained from published reports, or as part of the Breast Cancer Linkage Consortium, or from other investigators. All genotyping films were scored blindly with a standard lane marker used to maintain consistent coding of alleles. Key samples in the four kindreds presented here underwent duplicate typing for all relevant markers. All 19 kindreds have been typed for two polymorphic CA repeat markers: X2D6 (X17S518), a CA repeat isolated in our laboratory, and Mld15 (X17S250), a CA repeat provided by J. Weber (Weber et al., 1990). Several sources of probes were used to create genetic markers on chromosome 17, specifically chromosome 17 cosmid and lambda phage libraries created from sorted chromosomes by the Los Alamos National Laboratories (van Dilla et al., 1986).

LOD scores for each kindred with these two markers (X2D6, Mld15) and a third marker, Mld188 (X17S519, Hall et al., 1992), located roughly midway between these two markers, were calculated for two values of the recombination fraction, 0.001 and 0.1. (For calculation of LOD scores, see Oh, 1985). Likelihoods were computed under the model derived by Claus et al., 1991, which assumes an estimated gene frequency of 0.003, a lifetime risk in gene carriers of about 0.80, and population based age-specific risks for breast cancer in non-gene carriers. Allele frequencies for the three markers used for the LOD score calculations were calculated from our own laboratory typings of unrelated individuals in the CEPH panel (White and Laboul, 1988). Table 2 shows the results of the pairwise linkage analysis of each kindred with the three markers X2D6, Mld188, and Mld15.
Using a criterion for linkage to 17q of a LOD score >2.0 for at least one locus under the CASH model (Clay et al., 1991), four of the 13 kindreds appeared to be linked to 17q (K1901, K2073, K2093, and K2030). Three of the 17q-linked kindreds had informative recombinations.

These included kindreds K1911, K2073, K2103, and K2080. Three of the 17q-linked kindreds had informative recombinations.

### TABLE 2

**Pairwise Linkage Analysis of Kindreds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KINDRED</th>
<th>Mfd115 (D17S250)</th>
<th>Mfd188 (D17S579)</th>
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</table>

| 1910    | 0.06             | 0.30             | 0.06          | 0.30 |
| 1001    | -0.30            | -0.09            | NT            | NT  |
| 2035    | 2.34             | 1.65             | 0.94          | 0.90 |
| 2027    | -1.22            | -0.33            | -1.20         | -0.42 |
| 9018    | -0.54            | -0.22            | -0.17         | -0.10 |
| 1925    | 1.08             | 0.79             | 0.55          | 0.38 |
| 1927    | -0.41            | 0.01             | -0.35         | 0.07 |
| 1911    | -0.27            | -0.13            | -0.43         | -0.23 |
| 1929    | -0.49            | -0.25            | NT            | NT  |
| 1901    | 1.50             | 1.17             | 0.78          | 0.57 |
| 2082    | 4.25             | 3.36             | 6.07          | 5.11 |
| 2019    | -0.10            | -0.01            | -0.11         | -0.05 |
| 1900    | -0.14            | -0.11            | NT            | NT  |
| 2080    | -0.16            | -0.04            | 0.76          | 0.74 |
| 2073    | -0.41            | -0.29            | 0.63          | 0.49 |
| 1917    | -0.02            | -0.02            | NT            | NT  |
| 1920    | -0.03            | -0.02            | NT            | NT  |
| 2079    | 0.02             | 0.01             | -0.01         | -0.01 |
| 2039    | -1.67            | -0.83            | 0.12          | 0.59 |

NT - Kindred not typed for Mfd188.
Kindred 2082 is the largest 17q-linked breast cancer family reported to date by any group. The kindred contains 20 cases of breast cancer, and ten cases of ovarian cancer. Two cases have both ovarian and breast cancer. The evidence of linkage to 17q for this family is overwhelming; the LOD score with the linked haplotype is over 6.0, despite the existence of three cases of breast cancer which appear to be sporadic, i.e., these cases share no part of the linked haplotype between Mfd15 and 42D6. These three sporadic cases were diagnosed with breast cancer at ages 45, 47, and 54. In smaller kindreds, sporadic cancers of this type greatly confound the analysis of linkage and the correct identification of key recombinants. The key recombinant in the 2082 kindred is a woman who developed ovarian cancer at age 45 whose mother and aunt had ovarian cancer at ages 58 and 66, respectively. She inherited the linked portion of the haplotype for both Mfd188 and 42D6 while inheriting unlinked alleles at Mfd15; this recombinant event placed BRCA1 distal to Mfd15.

K1901 is typical of early-onset breast cancer kindreds. The kindred contains 10 cases of breast cancer with a median age at diagnosis of 43.5 years of age; four cases were diagnosed under age 40. The LOD score for this kindred with the marker 42D6 is 1.5, resulting in a posterior probability of 17q linkage of 0.06. Examination of haplotypes in this kindred identified a recombinant haplotype in an obligate male carrier and his affected daughter who was diagnosed with breast cancer at age 45. Their linked allele for marker Mfd15 differs from that found in all other cases in the kindred (except one case which could not be completely inferred from his children). The two haplotypes are identical for Mfd188 and 42D6. Accordingly, data from Kindred 1901 would also place the BRCA1 locus distal to Mfd15.

Kindred 2035 is similar to K1901 in disease phenotype. The median age of diagnosis for the eight cases of breast cancer in this kindred is 37. One case also had ovarian cancer at age 60. The breast cancer cases in this family descend from two sisters who were both unaffected with breast cancer until their death in the eight decade. Each branch contains four cases of breast cancer with at least one case in each branch having markedly early onset. This kindred has a LOD score of 2.34 with Mfd15. The haplotypes segregating with breast cancer in the two branches share an identical allele at Mfd15 but differ for the distal loci Mfd188 and NM20 (a marker typed as part of the consortium which is located just distal to 42D6 (Hall et al., 1992)). Although the two haplotypes are concordant for marker 42D6, it is likely that the alleles are shared identical by state (the same allele but derived from different ancestors), rather than identical by descent (derived from a common ancestor) since the shared allele is the second most common allele observed at this locus. By contrast the linked allele shared at Mfd15 has a frequency of 0.04. This is a key recombinant in our dataset as it is the sole recombinant in which BRCA1 segregated with the proximal portion of the haplotype, thus setting the distal boundary to the BRCA1 region. For this event to be a key recombinant requires that a second mutant BRCA1 gene be present in a spouse marrying into the kindred who also shares the rare Mfd15 allele segregating with breast cancer in both branches of the kindred. This event has a probability of less than one in a thousand. The evidence from this kindred therefore placed the BRCA1 locus proximal to Mfd186.

**EXAMPLE 3**

Creation of a Fine Structure Map and Refinement of the BRCA1 Region to Mfd191-Mfd188 using Additional STR Polymorphisms

In order to improve the characterization of our recombinants and define closer flanking markers, a dense map of this relatively small region on chromosome 17q was required. The chromosome 17 workshop has produced a consensus map of this region (Figure 1) based on a combination of genetic and physical mapping studies (Fain, 1992). This map contains both highly polymorphic STR polymorphisms, and a number of nonpolymorphic expressed genes. Because this map did not give detailed evidence for this order nor give any measure of local support for inversions in the order of adjacent loci, we viewed it as a rough guide for obtaining resources to be used for the development of new markers and construction of our own detailed genetic and physical map of a small region containing BRCA1. Our approach was to analyze existing STR markers provided by other investigators and any newly developed markers from our laboratory with respect to both a panel of meiotic (genetic) breakpoints identified using DNA from the CEPH reference families and a panel of somatic cell hybrids (physical breakpoints) constructed for this region. These markers included 26C2 developed in our laboratory which maps proximal to Mfd15, Mfd191 (provided by James Weber), THRA1 (Futreal et al., 1992a), and three polymorphisms kindly provided to us by Dr. Donald Black, NM23 (Hall et al., 1992), SCG40 (D17S181), and 6C1 (D17S293).

Genetic localization of markers.

In order to localize new markers genetically within the region of interest, we have identified a number of key meiotic breakpoints within the region, both in the CEPH reference panel and in our large breast cancer kindred (K2082). Given the small genetic distance in this region, they are likely to be only a relatively small set of recombinants which can be used for this purpose, and they are likely to group markers into sets. The order of the markers within each set can only
be determined by physical mapping. However, the number of genotypes necessary to position a new marker is minimized. These breakpoints are illustrated in Tables 3 and 4. Using this approach, we were able to genetically order the markers THRA1, 6C1, SCG40, and Mfd191. As can be seen from Tables 3 and 4, THRA1 and Mfd191 both map inside the Mfd15-Mfd163 region we had previously identified as containing the BRCA1 locus. In Tables 3 and 4, MP indicates a maternal or paternal recombinant. A "f" indicates inherited allele is of grandmaternal origin, while a "D" indicates grandmaternal origin, and "-" indicates that the locus was untyped or uninformative.
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