

HBOC syndrome can affect both men and women and occurs in people from all ethnic and racial backgrounds. In fact, HBOC syndrome is the most common cause of hereditary breast and ovarian cancer in all ethnic and racial backgrounds. The prevalence, which is the number of people with a disorder at a given time, is not known, but estimated to be somewhere between 1 in 200 to 1 in 800 people in the general population. In certain populations, the prevalence is higher. In individuals of Ashkenazi Jewish descent, HBOC syndrome affects about 1 in 40 people. Sometimes, this is due to a founder effect. A founder effect is when a small, isolated population of people expands over several generations leading to a high prevalence of a genetic trait.