Approximately 12% of women will develop breast cancer by the age of 85. Of these women:

- 70% will have \textit{sporadic} breast cancer
- 15 – 20% will have \textit{familial} breast cancer
- 5 – 10% will have a \textit{hereditary breast cancer syndrome}

The \textbf{goal} of any risk assessment strategy is to stratify patients into categories. In the case of breast cancer these are:

- Average risk
- Familial risk
- Hereditary risk

The \textbf{benefits} of an accurate risk assessment include:

- Application of appropriate screening guidelines
- Opportunity to discuss risk reducing strategies
- Patients have time to think about and act on risk reducing strategies
- Optimizes the use of medical resources by avoiding over/under screening and over/under treating

There are \textbf{different methods} of risk assessment.

- Collection and interpretation of personal medical and family history

\textbf{Risk assessment models} based on empiric data.

- Provide different types of risk information:
  - Chance of developing breast cancer (\textit{Claus Model}, \textit{Breast Cancer Risk Assessment Tool})
  - Chance of having a mutation in a gene, which results in a predisposition to a hereditary breast cancer syndrome. (\textit{BRCAPRO})