

Ovarian Cancer Research and Evaluation Activities

Health Care-Seeking Behaviors Among Women Experiencing Symptoms Suggestive of Ovarian Cancer

A research project with the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston is assessing health care-seeking behaviors among women who have symptoms that can suggest ovarian cancer. This project aims to identify factors that influence health care-seeking behavior and factors that may be modifiable through public health interventions to help shorten the length of time between the appearance of symptoms of ovarian cancer and a woman's decision to visit a physician. Such factors include the relationship between health care-seeking behavior in women and the following: attitudes towards health care and health care providers, anxiety or fear related to illness, effects of age, access to care, educational and socioeconomic status, health status, family history of cancer, knowledge about ovarian cancer, and barriers to obtaining care. Data collection from interviews began during 2003, and the project is expected to be completed during 2004.

Identifying Factors Associated with Early Detection of Ovarian Cancer

A research effort at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston will include multiyear projects on factors associated with the early detection of ovarian cancer. The primary objective of these studies is to identify factors that distinguish women with ovarian cancers diagnosed at earlier stages from those with cancers diagnosed at later stages by conducting a literature review, reviewing medical records of all patients diagnosed between 1995 and 1999, and conducting in-person interviews with a subsample of women. Interviews began during 2003, and preliminary data will be available during 2004.

Treatment Patterns and Outcomes for Ovarian Cancer

Tumor registries in California, Maryland, and New York have been funded to analyze data from hospital and private provider medical records for ovarian cancer treatment. This 3-year study is evaluating the percentage of patients who received the recommended standard of care for first-course treatment, the outcomes of these treatments, and the patients' survival rates. The quality and completeness of ovarian cancer staging data collected by these registries are also being evaluated. Protocol development and staff training have been completed. The data collection began during 2003, and the project will be completed by the end of 2004.

End-of-Life Care for Women with Ovarian Cancer

Results from earlier studies suggest that physicians often do not provide medication that is adequate to alleviate the pain experienced by cancer patients near the end of life. The objective of this project is to describe end-of-life care for women who died of ovarian cancer. The study includes a retrospective review of these women's medical records for the last 6 months of life. It examines such aspects of care as home health care and hospice care and referral, palliative care, co-morbidities, alternative treatments, and complementary therapies. Managed care organizations working on this project include the Alliance of Community Health Plans; Group Health Cooperative in Seattle, WA; Health Partners Research Foundation in Minneapolis, MN; Henry Ford Health System in Detroit, MI; Kaiser Permanente of Northern California—Oakland, CA; and Kaiser Permanente Northwest Region in Portland, OR. Data collection instruments for this study are being finalized, and the project is expected to be completed during 2004.

For more information, please contact:

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