

## Preventive use of blood thinners by cancer patients could save lives, cut costs

December 13 2011

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(Medical Xpress) -- Preventive use of blood thinners, or anticoagulants, in people receiving outpatient treatment for cancer could prevent the development of blood clots and improve their quality of life, according to a study led by Margaret Ragni, M.D., Ph.D., professor of medicine within the division of hematology/oncology at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. The results will be presented at the 53rd annual meeting of the American Society of Hematology (ASH) on Saturday, Dec. 9.

“[Blood clots](#) are a major cause of cancer patient deaths, but the current standard of care is to use [anticoagulants](#) in [cancer patients](#) only when they are hospitalized, undergo surgery or develop a clot,” said Dr. Ragni. “We wanted to find out whether giving anticoagulants preventively would stop clots from forming and improve health outcomes and quality of life. We found not only could this approach improve patient outcomes, it also appears to be cost-effective.”

Dr. Ragni and her team constructed a Markov model, which provides preliminary analyses to determine if the research intervention warrants an actual clinical trial. The model used data from published studies to evaluate the cost and effectiveness of preventive anticoagulant use in cancer patients with no history of blood clots as they moved through various clinical states. For this model, the clinical states evaluated were bleeding, new clots, cancer recurrence and death.

“Because a significant percentage of cancer patients suffer from blood

clots, it makes sense to examine whether or not preventive anticoagulation could work. When you take into consideration all of the benefits, balanced with the cost of the drug, this approach could be practice-changing,” said Dr. Ragni.

Dr. Ragni hopes this work will lead to clinical trials in the near future.

Provided by University of Pittsburgh

Citation: Preventive use of blood thinners by cancer patients could save lives, cut costs (2011, December 13) retrieved 11 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2011-12-blood-thinners-cancer-patients.html>

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