

Cervical cancer patients more likely to survive if treated at high-volume medical facilities

March 12 2013

Patients with locally advanced cervical cancer have better treatment outcomes and are more likely to survive the disease if they receive care at a high-volume medical center than patients treated at low-volume facilities, according to research presented today at the [Society of Gynecologic Oncology's annual meeting](#) on women's cancers in Los Angeles.

The study evaluated the relationship between treatment facility volumes and [survival outcomes](#), using data from the National Cancer Database, a joint program of the American College of Surgeons and the [American Cancer Society](#), which has tracked 26 million [cancer patients](#) treated at 1,500 hospitals across the U.S. Researchers from UPMC,; the University of California, San Francisco; Saint Joseph's Hospital of Creighton University and Drexel University College of Medicine examined the data of [cervical cancer](#) patients from Jan. 1, 1998 to Dec. 31, 2010.

"Successful treatment requires that multiple medical professionals, including gynecologic oncologists and radiation oncologists, coordinate internal and [external radiation](#) treatments and concurrent chemotherapy," said Jeff Lin, M.D., the study's principal investigator and a fellow in the division of gynecologic oncology at Magee-Womens Hospital of UPMC. "This treatment plan can be very effective for patients with this disease and higher volume centers are more likely to be able to coordinate the multidisciplinary approach necessary for this kind of care."

According to Dr. Lin, the study tallied patient volumes from centers tracked by the National Cancer Database, and found patients were 22 percent more likely to receive brachytherapy, the recommended [radiation treatment](#) approach for locally advanced cervical cancer, and nine percent more likely to receive the recommended chemotherapy, if they attended a center that treats a high volume of cervical cancer patients. Overall, patients' risk of dying from their disease dropped by four percent and they were more likely to receive the standard of care, if they attended such a facility.

"Thanks to previous research, we've known that ovarian cancer patients show improved outcomes if they receive their care from centers that treat a high volume of cases each year," said Thomas C. Krivak, M.D., Dr. Lin's mentor and the director of the [Gynecologic Oncology](#) Fellowship program at Magee. "This study indicates the same holds true for patients with cervical cancer. Now we can act on that knowledge."

While effective screening techniques coupled with the human papillomavirus vaccine prevent many early stage cervical cancers from occurring, approximately 12,000 women will be diagnosed with the disease this year in the U.S. When found early, cervical cancer can be highly treatable.

Provided by University of Pittsburgh Medical Center

Citation: Cervical cancer patients more likely to survive if treated at high-volume medical facilities (2013, March 12) retrieved 20 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2013-03-cervical-cancer-patients-survive-high-volume.html>

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