

Research reveals standard treatment for ovarian cancer

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Research led by a Dignity Health St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center physician on ovarian cancer was published in the Feb. 24, 2016 issue of *New England Journal of Medicine*. The research was directed by Bradley J. Monk, M.D. and researchers at 12 other medical facilities around the nation.

The featured research titled "Every-3-Week vs. Weekly Paclitaxel and Carboplatin for Ovarian Cancer" unveils that the standard front-line treatment for advanced [ovarian cancer](#) should either be every three week chemotherapy with carboplatin, paclitaxel plus bevacizumab (an antibody that inhibits blood vessels from feeding the cancer) or every three week chemotherapy with carboplatin and weekly dose intense paclitaxel. The latter does not involve expensive bevacizumab known as Avastin but is more inconvenient.

"This supports the use of weekly chemotherapy without bevacizumab in treating advanced ovarian cancer," says Dr. Monk who is Director, Division of Gynecologic Oncology Vice Chair, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology University of Arizona Cancer Center at St. Joseph's Hospital and senior author of the publication.

The research was funded by NRG Oncology (formerly the Gynecologic Oncology Group) which is part of the National Institutes of Health and enrolled patients at cancer centers around the country. Many women with ovarian cancer at the University of Arizona Cancer Center at St. Joseph's Hospital participated in this study.

Importantly, this study did not investigate intraperitoneal chemotherapy (IP) where the chemotherapy is infused directly into the belly. Many believe that the regimen of dose intense weekly chemotherapy supported by the current publication capitalizes on the same key components of IP [chemotherapy](#) namely higher doses and weekly administration. However, the intravenous recipe supported by this publication does did not show the intense side effects seen with IP treatments.

This advance is only a small step forward as newer appraises to ovarian cancer are being developed at University of Arizona Cancer Center at St. Joseph's Hospital. For example, doctors are studying a unique class of drugs called PARP inhibitors as well as immunotherapy. The latter uses recently discovered approaches to re-programming a woman's immune system to recognize and fight her ovarian cancer. Such drugs have recently been FDA approved to treat lung cancer and melanoma.

Provided by St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center

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