

SGO Endorses USPSTF Recommendations not to Screen Low-Risk Women for Ovarian Cancer

CHICAGO (Sept. 11, 2012) - The Society of Gynecologic Oncology (SGO) announced today that it endorses the recommendations of the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force not to screen asymptomatic women for ovarian cancer.

SGO emphasizes that the recommendations apply only to women at low risk for ovarian cancer and women without symptoms. They do not apply to women at increased risk or those with symptoms.

"Unfortunately, there is currently no effective screening tool for early detection of ovarian cancer in women who are not at increased risk of ovarian cancer," said SGO President Ronald D. Alvarez, MD. "Furthermore, there is at least moderate certainty that the harms of screening for ovarian cancer in low-risk women outweigh the benefits."

The most common symptoms of women with ovarian cancer are bloating, pelvic or abdominal pain, difficulty eating or feeling full quickly, and urinary symptoms such as urgency (a constant sense of having to urinate) and frequency (a need to urinate often).

"Women who are showing such symptoms or are diagnosed with ovarian cancer should consult with a gynecologic oncologist," Dr. Alvarez added. "Women with a family history of ovarian cancer should undergo genetic testing and counseling."

Genetic testing and counseling can help determine whether a woman is at higher risk for developing ovarian cancer. Risk factors include family history of ovarian cancer, mutations in genes known to increase risk (BRCA1 and BRCA2), diagnosis of pre-menopausal breast cancer and personal history of Lynch syndrome or inheritance of genetic mutations associated with Lynch syndrome. Women with family histories of the following additional cancers should also consider genetic counseling: colon, endometrial, fallopian tube and peritoneal cancer.

Women determined to be of high risk for ovarian cancer should be referred to a center specializing in their treatment.

"It is critical for research to continue to one day identify effective screening tools for this deadly disease," Dr. Alvarez added.

In September 2011, SGO issued a report, "Pathways to Progress in Women's Cancer: A Research Agenda Proposed by the Society of Gynecologic Oncology." The report includes several detailed recommendations for research needed to create these tools. It is available at:

http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?e=001OGAn8zUISbsveKC8kvaKHr8UwI4WbGYexCSVR-PBKfhX9Ot0EOIIdun4p2OYeUUYxxosZVyCwnYcjluaNXatdmHoVT-k0E0dvNXRvhAfgL9_G33vcCqumDrA6E7Sd4Npqba7rJ99CzTZeCSOHO0DusY2iGXTp_cIeWzYp3C5hAcTLZDJz9u8eA==