

Cancer Advances: Blood Test May Be Superior To CT Scans In Predicting Survival In Some Ovarian Cancer Patients

Posted online on September 13, 2004 on www.jco.org [1] [Read the original study](#) [2] CT scans and ultrasonography have traditionally been used to monitor cancer growth and a patient's response to treatment. However, unlike other solid tumors, ovarian cancer spreads diffusely through the abdomen, making the tumors more difficult to detect through traditional imaging techniques such as CT scans and ultrasonography. In a new study published in the *Journal of Clinical Oncology*, researchers from Copenhagen University Hospital in Denmark conducted a study to find out if a blood test to measure the level of CA125 protein produced by ovarian cancer cells in the blood might be a better tool for observing tumor growth or shrinkage than CT scans and ultrasonography. Using one of the world's largest databases of patients with ovarian cancer that has returned after initial treatment, researchers studied 131 patients receiving topotecan or paclitaxel-carboplatin to treat their cancer recurrence. They found that the criteria used to analyze the CA125 blood test was 2.6 times more accurate in predicting survival than the criteria for assessing CT scans. However, researchers noted that the study findings are only applicable to patients treated with topotecan or paclitaxel-carboplatin after their cancer had recurred, and pointed to the need for a randomized trial that includes additional chemotherapy agents or novel targeted therapies, and that assesses CA125 and the standard imaging techniques in predicting both survival and quality of life. **What Does This Mean For Patients?** Although not yet ready for standard practice, researchers noted that using the CA125 blood test to measure a patient's response to chemotherapy may allow patients to avoid costly and time-consuming CT scans, as well as the associated side effects, and may allow doctors to determine the effectiveness of a particular chemotherapy. Patients with recurrent ovarian cancer should talk to their doctors about the possibility of enrolling in clinical trials that assess CA125 in monitoring tumor growth and a patient's response to treatment.

Links:

[1] <http://www.jco.org/>

[2] <http://www.jco.org/cgi/reprint/JCO.2004.10.028v1?ijkey=7iGxgqVylgtws&keytype=ref&siteid=jco>