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Quality of Patient Care is Improved When Oncology Practices Measure How Well They Are Providing Care

An analysis of information provided by oncology practices participating in the American Society of Clinical Oncology?s Quality Oncology Practice Initiative (QOPI®) showed that the practices were able to improve the quality of care provided to patients between 2006 and 2010. QOPI® is a national program designed to measure the care provided to patients so each doctor's office or treatment center that participates in the program can use that information to improve the cancer care they provide.

Among the 156 doctor?s offices and treatment centers that participated in this analysis, improvements were highest in following new guidelines or the latest research, such as providing genetic testing to help choose treatment options for patients with metastatic (cancer that has spread) colorectal cancer, examining lymph nodes (tiny, bean shaped organs that help fight infection) for cancer after colorectal cancer surgery, testing for *KRAS* gene changes when giving treatments that target those changes [1], and use of the anti-nausea drug aprepitant (Emend) [2]. Use of these approaches improved from 5% to 69% over the four years included in this analysis. However, the practices that participated in this analysis did not improve care related to helping patients quit smoking [3] and preserve fertility [4], showing that there is still work to be done to provide patients with the best possible care.

What this means for patients

?It is reassuring that the level of care received in oncology practices that participate in QOPI is very high and that new treatments are quickly included into practice,? said lead author Michael N. Neuss, MD, Chief Medical Officer at the Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center in Tennessee. Many cancer treatment centers provide high-quality cancer care. It?s important to consider many things when choosing a treatment center, such as where it is located, whether they take your insurance, and how comfortable you are with the doctors and staff at the center.

Questions to Ask Your Doctor and Treatment Center Staff

- How often do you treat my specific type of cancer? How successful are those treatments?
- Do you follow the latest treatment guidelines and recommendations?
- Does this center/office participate in programs to improve the quality of patient care?
- Do you offer treatment in clinical trials?
- What types of insurance do you accept?
- What types of support services do you offer?

For More Information

Finding a Treatment Facility [5]

Choosing a Doctor [6]

Find an Oncologist [7]

About the QOPI® Certification Program [8]

Links:
[1] http://www.cancer.net/node/25736
[2] http://www.cancer.net/node/25711
[3] http://www.cancer.net/node/25002
[4] http://www.cancer.net/node/25658
[5] http://www.cancer.net/node/24527
[6] http://www.cancer.net/node/24949
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