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New Performance Tracking System Improves Care for Patients With Breast and Colon Cancers [1]

Quality Care Symposium
November 27, 2012

A large study on a new real-time performance tracking system showed that this system was able to improve the quality of care provided to patients with breast and colon cancers. Researchers also found that using this system reduced differences in cancer care related to age, race, and lack of health insurance. Developed by the Commission on Cancer of the American College of Surgeons, the Rapid Quality Reporting System (RQRS) monitors whether treatment centers adhere to five specific standards of quality care for breast and colon cancer. It uses current information on the care patients are receiving, instead of information from the past, to improve how patients are cared for in the treatment centers using RQRS.

In this study, researchers examined the quality of care for 64,129 patients receiving treatment in the hospitals using RQRS. Over four years, the hospitals were able to improve how well the five specific quality markers were followed, from 16% to 36%. The largest change was an increase in the use of breast cancer hormone therapy from 47% in 2006 to 85% in 2010.

What this means for patients

?When it finds gaps in care, RQRS alerts health providers so they can take corrective action,? said co-author on the study Andrew Stewart, Commission on Cancer, American College of Surgeons. What this means is that if a patient is not receiving the best possible care, the doctors and hospital staff can change that much faster than if such a system were not being used. All Commission on Cancer accredited hospitals are able to participate in the RQRS system, and about 350 programs are currently using the system.

Questions to Ask the Doctor and Treatment Center Staff

- What type of cancer do I have? What is the stage?
- What are my treatment options?
- Does this center/office participate in programs to improve the quality of patient care?
- Are there ways my care can be improved? How?

For More Information

Finding a Treatment Facility [2]

Choosing a Doctor [3]

Find an Oncologist [4]

Links:
[1] http://www.cancer.net/new-performance-tracking-system-improves-care-patients-breast-and-colon-cancers
[2] http://dev-cancernet.asco.org/node/24527
[3] http://dev-cancernet.asco.org/node/24949
[4] http://dev-cancernet.asco.org/node/24932