FROM THE DIVISION OF CANCER PREVENTION AND CONTROL

Prostate Cancer Research and Evaluation Activities

Case-Control Study of the Effectiveness of Prostate Cancer Screening

Screening for prostate cancer by the prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test or digital rectal examination (DRE) is controversial. This case-control led, population-based study is designed to assess the ability of screening PSA tests and DRE to reduce mortality from prostate cancer. The study compares the history of screening with PSA and DRE among case patients (who died of prostate cancer) with the history of screening among control patients (who did not die of prostate cancer). Four health plans are participating in this study: Henry Ford Health System, Kaiser Permanente Northwest, Kaiser Permanente of Northern California, and Kaiser Permanente of Southern California. Data collection has been completed, and preliminary results are expected in 2003.

Qualitative Evaluation of Physician Practices—Prostate Cancer Screening

This project involves focus groups conducted by telephone with primary care physicians in 35 states to explore their use of the PSA test, their awareness of PSA screening guidelines, what they tell patients about the PSA test before screening, and the factors that influence physicians' use of the PSA test in screening. Data collection and analysis were completed in May 2002. Compared with the routine screeners, those physicians who did not routinely screen their male patients with the PSA test tended to be more knowledgeable about the conflicting guidelines associated with PSA screening and were more likely to discuss the pros and cons of the PSA test with patients before screening. The results of this study will be used in the design of educational materials and to improve programmatic efforts to provide men with balanced information about prostate cancer screening.

CD-ROM Intervention for Prostate Cancer Screening

The goal of this project is to provide a cost-efficient and easily disseminated method of assisting men with decision making regarding prostate cancer screening. This goal will be achieved by (1) developing an interactive CD-ROM intervention for fostering informed decision making for prostate cancer screening; (2) evaluating the effectiveness of the CD-ROM intervention using a randomized controlled design in two settings (within a patient population of men 49 years of age or younger and within a patient population of men 50 years of age or older); (3) assessing the reach and efficacy of this approach; and (4) measuring and calculating fixed and marginal costs associated with the intervention, including the cost-effectiveness. If the intervention is proven effective and cost-efficient in promoting informed decision making, it will be disseminated to insurance plans, health departments, and other health care systems for use in patient and community populations. This project will be completed by fall 2003.

Evaluation of End-of-Life Care for Prostate Cancer Patients in the Managed Care Environment

The objective of this project is to describe end-of-life care and factors that may be associated with care for men who die of prostate cancer. Data specific to men enrolled in managed care organizations are being collected by a review of medical records from the 6 months prior to a patient's death. Information is being collected on the care given at the end of life (e.g., medical utilization, number of clinic or hospital visits, hospice care, pain management). Data on treatments used to control symptoms, including experimental therapies and alternative medicine, also are being collected. Results are anticipated in spring 2003.

For more information, please contact:
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