Gomez - Ovarian Cancer

Ovarian Cancer begins in the female organs that produce eggs. Ovarian Cancer is the second most common gynecologic disease and is the most deadly (Goff, et al., 2007, p. 221). Ovarian cancer has stages starting at I to IV meaning the lowest number is how less the cancer has spread and the higher the number is higher the cancer spread.

There are two systems used to determine what stage of cancer a woman is in. They both determine the size of the tumor, the spread to nearby lumph nodes, and the spread to distant sites (American Cancer Society, n.d.). It is said that about 95% of women experience the symptoms of having ovarian cancer before being diagnosed (Goff, et al., 2007, p. 225). Symptoms of ovarian cancer is bloating, pain, increased size, indigestions, constipation, nausea, abdominal pain, pain with intercourse, back pain, fatigue, anorexia, weight loss, frequent urination, and bleeding. The most common symptoms are abdominal or gastrointestinal, but gynecologic were the least common. A high BMI can increase the risk of developing ovarian cancer because of the increase of estrogen (Lockwood-Rayermann, et al., 2009, p. 36).

To diagnose ovarian cancer, they use different methods. One method is the Memorial Symptom Assessment Scale which is an instrument that assesses thirty two psychological and physical symptoms according to severity, distress, and frequency (Portenoy, et al., 1994, p. 908). One of the most obvious solutions is to go to a doctor if you are experiencing symptoms as well. There are also screening tests and exams that can be used to find ovarian cancer in those who do not have any of the symptoms. There are two main tests used to screen for ovarian cancer which are called the transvaginal ultrasound and the CA-125 blood test (American Cancer Society, n.d.). The transvaginal ultrasound uses sound waves to see the fallopian tubes, ovaries, and uterus and can be used to find tumors in the ovaries (American Cancer Society, n.d.). The CA-125 blood test is used to measure the CA-125 protein in your blood. Although it doesn’t show that you have ovarian cancer, it can be used to see if the treatment is working by the CA-125 protein decreasing from a high level (American Cancer Society, n.d.). Ultrasounds can be used if there is a problem with the ovaries and can find tumors. There are more ways of screening being researched but there are no reliable screening tests at the moment.

Cancer patients would report symptom occurrence about 20 to 30 times a month compared to 2 – 3 times (Goff, et al. 2007, p. 225). Patients with ovarian cancer who are diagnosed in an early stage have a 93% five year survival rate (Lockwood-Rayermann, et al., 2009, p. 36). It is believed that ovarian cancer has a higher percentage of developing in women in their 70s. Women who have a family history of breast or ovarian cancer are at risk for ovarian cancer. (Lockwood-Rayermann, et al., 2009, p. 36). According to the American Cancer Society (n.d.), during a localized stage, 92% of women have a 5-year survival rate (Date). During the regional stage, 75% of women have a 5 year survival rate (American Cancer Society, n.d.). During the distant stage, only 30% of women have a 5 year survival rate if they have ovarian cancer (American Cancer Society, n. d.).

 There are many different way ovarian cancer can be prevented. According to the American Cancer Society (n.d.), women can avoid certain risk factors by being at a healthy weight or to not take a hormone replacement after menopause. Women can also use oral contraceptives to reduce the risk of developing ovarian cancer and gynecologic surgery can be used but only for valid medical reasons (American Cancer Society, n.d.). Women can also get their fallopian tubes and uterus removed to prevent ovarian cancer (American Cancer Society, nd.).

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