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### **New Ovarian Cancer Study Offers Hope and Highlights Risks**

Research demonstrating an advance in the treatment of late-stage ovarian cancer was published in the January 5, 2006 issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine* (NEJM). The article details the findings of a study led by Dr. Deborah Armstrong of the Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center at Johns Hopkins, conducted with her colleagues through the Gynecological Oncology Group (GOG) and supported by the National Cancer Institute's (NCI) research network.

The study evaluated 429 women with stage III ovarian cancer who had previously undergone surgery to remove the tumors, and then received follow-up chemotherapy. The trial compared two different treatment regimens: paclitaxel and cisplatin administered intravenously (IV), versus IV-administered paclitaxel followed by intraperitoneal (IP) cisplatin and paclitaxel, which were delivered directly into the abdominal cavity. According to the data, the women who received the IP-administered chemo regimen had a median survival that was 16 months longer than the women who received the chemo intravenously.

This study is the eighth clinical trial to evaluate the benefits of delivering chemotherapy directly through the abdomen for women with advanced ovarian cancer. Together, the data from these studies indicate a tremendous improvement in the survival of women who are treated with IP chemotherapy, which allows for higher doses and more frequent administration of the drugs. Ironically, IP-therapy is not a new treatment method, but it has not been widely used in the past because it is more complicated to administer and increases the toxicity that the patient experiences.

In the IP chemotherapy arm of this study, increased toxicity was noted among those trial participants, although most side effects were temporary and manageable. Of the 205 patients on this arm, only 42% underwent all six IP treatment cycles due to complications arising from the abdominal catheter used to administer the chemo, versus 90% of patients on the IV-administered arm who completed

treatment. Although the data shows higher toxicities for the IP treatment arm, the study authors report that one year after treatment, women in both study groups reported the same quality of life.

Because this research provides enough data to potentially bring about a significant shift in the way that women with stage III ovarian cancer are treated, NCI issued a rare clinical announcement based on these findings. The announcement – issued January 4, 2006 – summarized the results of the study in an effort to disseminate this news broadly to healthcare providers and patients, with the hope that this new treatment regimen will soon be widely available. Perhaps more importantly, the NCI announcement also called for further studies to determine the best IP drug regimen, the optimal number of treatments, better methods for using abdominal catheters, as well as how to reduce the toxicity associated with IP therapy.

While these study results are extremely promising, it will be important to better understand how to reduce the side effects that come with this treatment so that it will be more tolerable for the patients undergoing it. And it will be critical for researchers to try to get those answers as quickly and safely as possible, since ovarian cancer is the leading gynecological cancer killer among women. In 2005 alone, an estimated 22,220 women in the United States were diagnosed with ovarian cancer, and an estimated 16,210 women died from the disease, according to NCI.

For more information on this study and NCI's clinical announcement, please visit <http://www.cancer.gov/newscenter/pressreleases/IPchemotherapyrelease>. For more information on ovarian cancer, please visit the Ovarian Cancer National Alliance at [www.ovariancancer.org](http://www.ovariancancer.org).

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### **The Advocate Institute Announces Second "Focus on Research™" Course**

Research Advocacy Network is pleased to announce a new course in the Focus on Research series. Focus on Research courses are preparatory classes for equipping and educating advocates about the biomedical research process. We will be accepting applications for the course that will be held in advance of the American Society of Clinical Oncology Annual Meeting. Watch your inbox for a special message about the application process.

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### **Videotaping to Enhance Clinical Trial Awareness**

The Eastern Cooperative Oncology Group (ECOG) Patient Representative Committee embarked on a very ambitious pilot project at the ECOG Fall Meeting in Tampa. The purpose of this project is to provide patients with another way, in addition to printed material or ECOG's Web site, to learn about specific clinical trials. Twenty-one principal investigators were videotaped explaining the purpose and schema of 21 trials in various disease categories. The videos range from three to five minutes in length and will be posted on many patient advocate organization Web sites. ECOG will pursue Central Institutional Review Board (CIRB) approval so they can also be hosted on ECOG.org. The videos will be hosted by various cancer advocacy organization Web sites including:

- Association of Cancer Online Resource (ACOR)
- Colorectal Cancer Coalition (3C)
- International Myeloma Foundation (IMF)
- Kidney Cancer Association (KCA)
- Living Beyond Breast Cancer (LBBC)
- Leukemia Lymphoma Society (LLS)
- Lymphoma Research Foundation (LRF)
- Melanoma Center
- PanCAN – Pancreatic Cancer Action Network
- US TOO – Prostate Cancer Education and Support Women Against Lung Cancer (WALC)

Each trial will also have a Web page hosted on the advocate Web sites listed above. The Web page will include the video, a short description of the trial, and links to other resources. These links will be shared with you as soon as they are available. *(Reprinted with permission from the Eastern Cooperative Oncology Group)*

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### **Patient Education Booklet Available from NCI "Providing Your Tissue for Research"**

The National Cancer Institute has announced that the new patient education booklet on providing tissue for research is available for ordering at <http://cancer.gov/publications>. You then go to item #2 on the list to "search". Use the key word "tissue" in your search.

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### **What It Means For Me™: Fact Sheets**

Two fact sheets have been added to the "What it Means for Me" Fact Sheet Series. These fact sheet topics are on the results of the Avastin and Herceptin studies in breast cancer. These are available for download on the [Research Advocacy Network Publications](#) area of the website.

- [Avastin Studies: What It Means For Me](#)
- [Herceptin Studies: What It Means for Me](#)

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### **Reporting on some of our activities:**

#### **Advocate Institute adds playbacks from "Research Into Practice" Lecture Series**

The Advocate Institute has added three session playbacks from the NCCN / RAN Advocate Lecture Series on "Research Into Practice." This series is an excellent way for advocates to better understand the influencers and barriers to advancing research results into clinical practice. The one hour sessions can be accessed at: <http://www.researchadvocacy.org/advocateInstitute/>

#### **Training Workshop for the GOG Patient Advocacy Committee**

Research Advocacy Network congratulates the Gynecology Oncology Group on the newly formed Patient Advocate Committee. The group completed a very successful training at the meeting in San Diego. Good work! Expect great things from this very dedicated and talented committee. Thanks to the [Coalition of Cancer Cooperative Groups](#) for sponsoring this event.

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### **Research Advocacy Network Activities**

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| • Jan 19-21—Patient Advocate Committee at the Radiation Therapy Oncology Group (RTOG)   |
| • Feb 6-7—National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) HER2 Testing Task Force  |
| • March 8-12—NCCN 11th Annual Conference, Roundtable presentation- Oncology Practice Today: Quality Evaluation, Coverage & Reimbursement  |
| • March 16, 23, 30— <b>SAVE THE DATES!!!</b> - Indiana University DoD Breast Cancer Centers of Excellence Advocate Lecture Series (email <a href="mailto:info@researchadvocacy.org">info@researchadvocacy.org</a> for more information) |

- April 19 Intercultural Cancer Council Biennial Symposium Pre-Conference Workshop
- April 19-23rd 10th [ICC Biennial Symposium](#), Washington, DC
- May-June Focus on Research Webconferences
- June 2-6-[American Society of Clinical Oncology \(ASCO\)](#) Annual Meeting, Atlanta, GA

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<b>Awareness Events</b>	
<b>January</b>	<b>July</b>
Cervical Cancer Screening Month	<b>August</b>
<b>February</b>	Multiple Myeloma Awareness Week
National Donor Day (14 <sup>th</sup> )	National Minority Donor Awareness Day(1 <sup>st</sup> )
Wise Health Consumer Month	National Lesbians and Cancer Awareness Day (24 <sup>th</sup> )
<b>March</b>	<b>September</b>
Kidney Cancer Awareness Month	Childhood Cancer Month
Lymphedema "D" Day (6 <sup>th</sup> )	Gynecological Cancer Awareness Month
National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month	Leukemia & Lymphoma Awareness Month
National Nutrition Month	National Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month
<b>April</b>	National Thyroid Cancer Awareness Month
Cancer Control Month	Prostate Cancer Awareness Month
Cancer Detection & Early Awareness Month	Pain Awareness Month
Cancer Fatigue Awareness Month	<b>October</b>
Head & Neck Cancer Awareness Month	National Breast Cancer Awareness Month
Lymphoma Awareness Month	National Mammography Day(21 <sup>st</sup> )
National Young Adult Cancer Awareness Week - April 3-9	<b>November</b>
Oral Cancer Awareness Week - April 11 – 17	Brain Tumor Awareness Day
Testicular Cancer Awareness Week - April 1-7	Lung Cancer Awareness Month
<b>May</b>	National Hospice & Palliative Care Month
Brain Tumor Action Week - May 1-7	National Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month
Cover the Uninsured Week – May 1-7	National Family Caregivers Month
Melanoma Monday(2 <sup>nd</sup> )	National Caregivers Month
National Melanoma/Skin Cancer Detection & Prevention Month	National Bone Marrow Donor Awareness Month
Skin Cancer Awareness Month	Smoking Cessation Awareness Month
<b>June</b>	<b>December</b>
National Cancer Survivors Day (4 <sup>th</sup> )	National Aplastic Anemia Awareness Month
Sarcoma Awareness Month	

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**We need your help!** Your Donation Makes a Difference! If you believe in the hope of research and the power of advocacy, you can help the Research Advocacy Network by sending a donation. RAN is an exempt 501 c 3 organization and dependent on your support to keep going. Our mailing address is: East Rand Rd, Suite 175, Arlington Heights, IL 60004. Thanks! Another way to donate is just by shopping! Buy your office supplies, books, sporting gear, CDs and everyday items at the iGive Mall at [www.iGive.com/ResearchAdvocacyNetwork](http://www.iGive.com/ResearchAdvocacyNetwork). You can shop at 500 stores and without even knowing it, you'll be helping Research Advocacy Network at the same time. A check was just received from this program and we want to say thank you for supporting Research Advocacy Network in this way!

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**Research Advocacy Network Welcomes New Members!!!**

Thanks to all of you who have recently joined the Network. For those that have not yet please go to [www.researchadvocacy.org](http://www.researchadvocacy.org) and click on "Join". There are no dues for Network membership and this will assure that you receive all notices and have access to Network programs.

Network News is currently published 10 times per year and includes articles on advocacy, research results and activities. Please share Network News with your friends with the link above. However, we ask when using information from Network News that you give attribution, and keep the subscription and copyright information intact.

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Eastern Cooperative Oncology Group

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