Ovarian Cancer: A Policy Perspective on an Orphan Disease

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Introduction

- Ovarian cancer
- Known as a silent killer
- CDC and other governmental organizations have played a role in promoting public health information of gynecological disease through the Inside Knowledge campaign
- Literature Review of ovarian cancer risk factors, public health agenda, and current challenges of ovarian cancer research

Results

Lit Review: Ovarian Cancer in the world: epidemiology and risk factors
- The most common gynecologic cancers that ranks third after cervical and uterine cancer and is three times more lethal than breast cancer
- Highest prevalence of ovarian cancer is seen in non-Hispanic white women (12.0 per 100,000), followed by Hispanic (10.3 per 100,000), non-Hispanic black (9.4 per 100,000), and Asian/Pacific Islander women (9.2 per 100,000)
- Risk reduced with pregnancy, induced abortion, risk decreases with more children, use of oral contraception
- Risk increased with nulliparity, infertility, family history of breast or ovarian cancer
  - BRCA gene
  - Socioeconomic status is a predictor of incidence and survival of ovarian cancer

Background

Ovarian Cancer- An Orphan Drug
“ drugs in the diagnosis, prevention, or treatment of a medical condition affecting fewer than 200,000 people in the U.S.-grants a product market exclusivity for a seven-year period if the sponsor complies with certain FDA specifications, as well as tax credits and prescription drug user fee waivers. This designation does not, though, shorten the duration of the regulatory review and approval process”

Methods

- Used the NIH’s National Library of Medicine’s PubMed.gov database
  - Searched terms related to
    - Ovarian cancer and public policy response
    - Orphan disease status
    - The public health response to increase drug discovery

Results

Lit Review. Expanding the Public Health Research Agenda for Ovarian Cancer

Recommendations/Discussions

U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommended genetic counseling and BRCA1 and BRCA2 testing for women with a strong family history of breast or ovarian cancer

The merits of an annual ovarian cancer screen among the average-risk population with a combination of the serum biomarker CA-125 and transvaginal ultrasoundography


1) provide information about the five major gynecologic cancers,
2) disseminate materials conveying the key message that when many cancers are found early, treatment is most effective,
3) educate women and healthcare providers about the signs and symptoms of gynecologic cancer, available screening tests, prevention strategies, and risk factors.

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References:


