



Title	Follow-up in Gynecological Cancer Patients
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Reference	2009; 11(2). ISBN 978-87-7676-919-2. www.sst.dk/publ/Publ2009/MTV/Ktrlforl_gynaek_kraeftpat/MTV_kontrolforloeb_net_final.pdf (Danish; English summary)

Aim

To assess the follow-up provided for women who have completed treatment for endometrial or ovarian cancer to:

- assess the effects of follow-up
- improve the follow-up.

Conclusions and results

The systematic review of the literature does not document that follow-up enhances the probability of surviving the disease. The report notes that scientific literature is insufficient in addressing the follow-up of endometrial and ovarian cancer, and the quality-of-life studies are not unequivocal. Many women perceive that follow-up gives a sense of security, but they also experience nervousness before every consultation. The analysis points out the opportunity for organizing more differentiated follow-up, adjusted to the individual's risk for relapse and the individual's need for security.

Based on the results of this report, it is appropriate to question whether follow-up has become a natural extension of treatment, ie, part of the course of cancer that has become a traditional and established part of the treatment culture in Denmark. However, this does not change the viewpoint that follow-up is an intervention, and that healthcare interventions must be evidence based to be justified (even though follow-up is used to identify suitable patients for scientific studies). In a system with limited resources, debate on priorities is a positive sign.

Recommendations

This report focuses objectively on follow-up of women with endometrial and ovarian cancer. It is hoped that the report can support a scientific debate on priorities, leading to the benefit of following up cancer patients in a manner that outweighs the efforts necessary to provide this care.

Methods

Systematic literature searches were conducted on all aspects of the assessment to investigate questions related to assessing health technology. The literature found via the searches was critically assessed, and studies considered to be of sufficiently high quality were included as a basis for conclusions. Further data were collected to supplement the literature searches. Focus group interviews were conducted as part of analyzing the patients, and the organizational analysis included a questionnaire survey of relevant hospital departments and interviews of key people. The economic analysis is based on the primary data collection and registry analysis.

Further research/reviews required

Investigating whether follow-up of patients with cancer influences their rehabilitation would be important. This health technology assessment focused on the key clinical content of follow-up. Given the limited resources and timeframe of the project, it does not include assessment of rehabilitation.