“Assessing Ovarian Cancer Risk When Considering Elective Oophorectomy at the Time of Hysterectomy”

(Allison F. Vitonis, SM, Linda Titus-Ernstoff, PhD, and Daniel W. Cramer, MD)


Click Here to Read the Full Article

1. What is the study design? In an earlier article (Terry KL, De Vivo I, Titus-Ernstoff L, Shih MC, Cramer DW. Androgen receptor cytosine, adenine, guanine repeats, and haplotypes in relation to ovarian cancer risk. Cancer Res 2005;65:5974–81.), the authors claim that this is a population-based study. What does that mean? Contrast the method of recruitment of cases and controls for each phase of the study. Discuss why the authors used different methods of recruiting cases and controls. Do you agree with the authors’ claim that this study is population based? Discuss whether it matters if this study is population based.

2. Approximately 10% of women in the first and second phases died before they could be interviewed. Discuss whether this affects the strength of the study. Review techniques of dealing with missing data. Are any applicable to this paper?

3. What is recall bias? How might recall bias be confounding the authors' observations?

4. How were cases of ovarian cancer verified? Was an independent pathology review needed for this study?

5. Review the derivation of absolute risks from the model. Did the authors use relative risks or odds ratios? Why might one be preferred over the other?

6. Discuss whether the hysterectomy group (summarized in Table 3) constitutes validation of the risk score. Discuss whether it is appropriate for the authors to include women under 40 years of age in their analysis shown in Table 3.

7. Will you use the information in Table 4 for counseling your patients? Of the following, which will your patients find more useful in making their decision about oophorectomy: Odds ratios, relative risks, or absolute risks?


9. How did the authors select the factors used in their model? Discuss whether these and other factors, such as estimated number of ovulatory cycles, should have been included in the risk score.