CERVICAL CANCER in Pennsylvania

INCIDENCE:

The age-adjusted incidence rate for invasive cervical cancer among residents has been slightly lower in recent years (see chart above). There were 697 cases diagnosed in 1987 for a rate of 9.2 per 100,000 1970 United States standard million population, compared to 669 diagnosed cases of invasive cervical cancer in 1997 and a rate of 8.5. Diagnoses of invasive cervical cancer cases represent missed opportunities at screening (Pap tests), early diagnosis, and treatment.

MORTALITY:

All cervical cancer deaths should be considered preventable. In 1998, there were 210 cervical cancer deaths among residents of Pennsylvania and an age-adjusted mortality rate of 2.4 per 100,000 1970 United States standard million population. The annual age-adjusted death rates between 1988 and 1998 have remained relatively unchanged. In 1988, the rate was 2.8 and there were 230 deaths reported that year.

Age-Adjusted Incidence Rates, Invasive Cervical Cancer United States and Pennsylvania Residents by Race, 1997

The bar graph above shows that Pennsylvania’s age-adjusted incidence rates in 1997 for invasive cervical cancer were higher than the United States 1997 rates for all cases and among both white and black females. Pennsylvania’s rates were 13.3 percent higher for all cases; 19.4 percent higher for whites; and, 6.1 percent higher among black female residents, compared to United States rates.

Age-Adjusted Mortality Rates, Cervical Cancer United States and Pennsylvania Residents by Race, 1997

The graph above shows that Pennsylvania’s age-adjusted mortality rates for cervical cancer were slightly higher than the United States rates for all deaths and among whites but were much higher among blacks in 1997. The 1997 state rate for all deaths was 11.5 percent higher than the United States rate and only 4.3 percent higher among white females. However, the state rate for black females in 1997 was 44.4 percent higher than the United States rate.
ALL CERVICAL CANCER – Between 1987 and 1997, the percent of early stage (local) diagnoses of invasive cervical cancer among all residents increased while the percent of regional and distant stage diagnoses declined. For local stage diagnoses, the percent increased from 50.6 in 1987 to 55.9 in 1997. Regional stage diagnoses declined from 36.4 to 33.3 percent, and the percent of diagnoses for distant metastases declined from 13.0 to 10.8 percent.

WHITES – The changes in staging patterns between 1987 and 1997 for white female residents diagnosed with breast cancer mirrored those that occurred for all cases. Local diagnoses increased to 57.1 percent in 1997 from 51.7 percent in 1987. The percent of regional stage diagnoses declined (35.6 percent in 1987; 33.1 percent in 1997). And the percent diagnoses of distant metastases also declined from 12.7 to 9.8 percent.

BLACKS – Among black females, the percent of local diagnoses increased and regional diagnoses declined but distant metastases increased. In 1997, local diagnoses among black women accounted for 51.3 percent (up from 41.2 percent in 1987); regional diagnoses, for 30.8 percent (down from 42.4 percent in 1987); and, distant metastases, for 17.9 percent (up from 16.5 percent in 1987). The continued higher mortality rates among black females is directly related to the increase in late stage diagnoses.

Pap test screening can effectively reduce the cancer mortality rate. The American Cancer Society recommends an annual Pap test and pelvic exam for all women who are or have been sexually active or who are age 18 and older. After three or more consecutive satisfactory exams with normal findings, the Pap test may be performed less frequently.

EVER HAD A PAP TEST – According to results from the 1998 statewide sample telephone survey conducted by the Pennsylvania Department of Health’s Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), 92 percent of all women aged 18 and older had ever had a Pap test. The percentage was the same for white female residents and similar (91 percent) for black females. The national year 2000 objective is 95 percent.

EVER HAD A PAP TEST – According to results from the 1998 BRFSS survey showed that 79 percent of all women aged 18 and older had had a Pap test in the past three years. The percentage was the same for white residents. Among black females of those ages, 85 percent reported having had a Pap test in the previous three years. The national year 2000 objective is 85 percent.

PAP TEST IN LAST THREE YEARS – Results from the 1998 BRFSS survey showed that 79 percent of all women aged 18 and older had had a Pap test in the past three years. The percentage was the same for white residents. Among black females of those ages, 85 percent reported having had a Pap test in the previous three years. The national year 2000 objective is 85 percent.

NOTES: This pamphlet was produced by the Bureau of Health Statistics, Pennsylvania Department of Health. The Bureau can be contacted by telephone (717-783-2548), FAX (717-772-3258) or in writing (555 Walnut St., 6th Floor, Harrisburg, PA 17101-1900). Website is at www.health.state.pa.us/stats/. The Department is an equal opportunity provider of grants, contracts, services, and employment. Call the Department toll free at 877-PA-HEALTH. All the age-adjusted rates that appear here were calculated by the direct method using the 1970 United States standard million population. United States incidence rates are based on data collected by the SEER (Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results) program of the National Cancer Institute from several cancer registries throughout the country which are considered to be reasonable representative subsets of the United States population.