James Graham Brown Cancer Center
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Intraperitoneal Therapy Study

- Treatment of ovarian cancer usually involves surgery to remove as much tumor as possible, followed by chemotherapy. The chemotherapy is usually given into a vein allowing it to be carried throughout the body by the blood stream.

- Gynecologic cancer specialists at the University of Louisville's James Graham Brown Cancer Center have participated in a large randomized study published in the New England Journal of Medicine showing that patients receiving part of their chemotherapy into the peritoneal cavity (intraperitoneal) had a statistically much improved outcome.

- Patients enrolled in the study and chosen randomly to receive intraperitoneal therapy had their median survival rate extended by more than 16 months longer than patients treated with intravenous chemotherapy alone.

- This is now the third randomized study that has shown better survival for patients receiving chemotherapy using the intraperitoneal route.

- Intraperitoneal chemotherapy is given through a small reservoir placed beneath the skin lying over the lower ribcage. This is connected to a narrow tube which runs beneath the skin to enter the peritoneal cavity to one side of the abdomen at about the level of the umbilicus. This two piece apparatus is called an intraperitoneal port. It may be placed either at the time of initial surgery or just prior to chemotherapy being given.

- The chemotherapy is usually given in cycles which consist of treatment with two chemotherapy agents on two consecutive days, followed by a single agent on one day the following week, with the whole cycle being repeated every 21 days. The two agents are currently cisplatin and paclitaxel.

- The chemotherapy is given at the Brown Cancer Center and University Hospital. After routine premedication, the intraperitoneal port is accessed and the solution containing the chemotherapy agent is warmed to body temperature. Two liters are instilled over a few minutes. Lying on the bed, the patient is repositioned every 15 minutes for two hours in order to encourage thorough distribution of the chemotherapy solution. After completion of therapy, the patient goes home. The fluid remains in the peritoneal cavity.

- Some patients may experience some abdominal cramping, but this is usually mild.