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History of comorbidities and survival of ovarian cancer patients, results from the Ovarian Cancer Association Consortium

A full list of authors and affiliations appears at the end of the article.

Abstract

Background—Comorbidities can affect survival of ovarian cancer patients by influencing treatment efficacy. However, little evidence exists on the association between individual concurrent comorbidities and prognosis in ovarian cancer patients.

Methods—Among patients diagnosed with invasive ovarian carcinoma who participated in 23 studies included in the Ovarian Cancer Association Consortium, we explored associations between histories of endometriosis, asthma, depression, osteoporosis, and autoimmune, gallbladder, kidney, liver and neurological diseases and overall and progression-free survival. Using Cox proportional hazards regression models adjusted for age at diagnosis, stage of disease, histology, and study site, we estimated pooled hazard ratios and 95% confidence intervals to assess associations between each comorbidity and ovarian cancer outcomes.

Results—None of the comorbidities were associated with ovarian cancer outcome in the overall sample nor in strata defined by histological subtype, weight status, age at diagnosis or stage of disease (local/regional vs. advanced).

Conclusions—Histories of endometriosis, asthma, depression, osteoporosis, and autoimmune, gallbladder, kidney, liver, or neurologic diseases were not associated with ovarian cancer overall or progression-free survival.

Impact—These previously diagnosed chronic diseases do not appear to affect ovarian cancer prognosis.

Keywords

chronic diseases; comorbidities; ovarian cancer; survival; prognosis

Introduction

Preexisting chronic diseases among ovarian cancer patients can result in the use of nonstandard treatment regimens (1) or intolerance to the standard treatments (2), therefore, limiting cancer therapy or affecting prognosis in these patients (3). Despite the likely role of comorbidities in ovarian cancer prognosis, detailed evidence regarding associations with particular comorbidities is limited, and results of earlier studies conducted to explore such

Corresponding author: Kirsten B. Moysich, A-316 Carlton House, Roswell Park Cancer Institute, Elm and Carlton Streets, Buffalo, NY 14263. Phone: 1-716-845-8004; Fax 1-716-845-1126. kirsten.moysich@roswellpark.org.

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associations are not consistent (1-6). These studies either did not distinguish among individual comorbidities or had insufficient statistical power to examine associations, particularly for histological subtypes.

Previously we reported on the association between histories of hypertension, heart disease, and diabetes in relation to overall survival (OS) and progression-free survival (PFS) among ovarian cancer patients (7). In this study, using a large multi-national sample of studies participating in the Ovarian Cancer Association Consortium (OCAC), we explore the relationship between other selected common comorbidities and OS and PFS among women diagnosed with ovarian cancer. We hypothesize that these comorbidities are associated with poor ovarian cancer prognosis.

Materials and methods

Our analyses use pooled data from 23 studies. Characteristics of the included studies are shown in Supplemental table 1. Patient-related data were collected by either self- or interviewer-administered questionnaires and/or medical records reviews. These data were obtained from the participating study centers, cleaned, and harmonized. Comorbidities of interest comprise endometriosis, asthma, autoimmune diseases (dermatomyositis, polymyositis, rheumatoid arthritis, Sjögren's syndrome, scleroderma, systemic lupus erythematosus, inflammatory bowel disease, Hashimoto's disease, Grave's disease, and Type I diabetes), depression/anxiety, osteoporosis, and any kidney, liver, gallbladder, and neurological diseases. For the analyses, the study sample was limited to women with invasive epithelial ovarian cancer and no missing information on vital status, length of follow up at the time of last contact or the comorbidity of interest (number varies for each disease).

We used age-, stage-, histology-, and site-adjusted Cox proportional hazards models to explore associations between each comorbidity and ovarian cancer outcomes by calculating pooled hazards ratios (HRs) and their 95% confidence intervals (CIs). We were not able to assess heterogeneity among study-specific HRs due to limited numbers of cases in some studies. No other etiologically or prognostically important available factors appreciably changed observed estimates of age- and stage-adjusted study-specific or overall HRs; therefore, they were not included in any of the models.

In all the models, overall survival (OS) was defined as the time from the date of diagnosis to the date of death or end of follow up, whichever occurred first. Progression-free survival (PFS) was defined as the time from the date of diagnosis to the date when progression status (persistence, recurrence, or death) was determined, or the end of follow-up for cases without identified progression. Cases with no history of the comorbidity of interest were the referent.

We also examined whether or not associations differed according to the main histological subtypes (high-grade serous, low-grade serous, mucinous, endometrioid, and clear cell), overweight status ($18.5 \text{ kg/m}^2 < \text{body mass index (BMI)} < 25.0 \text{ kg/m}^2$ vs. $\text{BMI} \geq 25.0 \text{ kg/m}^2$), age at diagnosis (< 65 vs. ≥ 65 years), and stage of disease (local/regional vs. advanced). In addition, we examined possible multiplicative interactions by likelihood ratio statistics.

We had 80% power to detect the following risk estimates for OS and PFS respectively: 1.11 and 1.20 for endometriosis, 1.28 and 1.34 for asthma, 1.15 and 1.23 for depression, 1.26 and 1.41 for osteoporosis, 1.22 and 1.27 for autoimmune disease, 1.50 and 1.95 for kidney disease, 1.71 and 1.97 for liver disease, 1.16 and 1.21 for gallbladder disease, and 2.08 and 2.29 for neurological diseases.

Results

Results of the analyses are presented in Table 1. No significant associations were observed between histories of endometriosis, asthma, depression, osteoporosis, autoimmune, gallbladder, kidney, liver, and neurological diseases and OS or PFS. Results were also not significant and not different in strata defined by histological subtype, overweight status, age, and stage of disease. No evidence of multiplicative interaction was observed.

Discussion

In this large international sample of women diagnosed with invasive ovarian cancer, we did not observe associations between histories of endometriosis, asthma, depression, osteoporosis, and autoimmune, kidney, liver, gallbladder, and neurological diseases and OS and PFS. Results of our study are similar to others reporting no association between presence of comorbidity and survival among ovarian cancer patients (1, 4, 6). Our results are also consistent with those from Hemminki et al.(8) that showed no association between autoimmune disease and survival (HR=1.09; 95% CI:0.99-1.20). These results suggest that various comorbidities have little impact on survival for a disease that is already characterized by poor prognosis (4).

Strengths of our study include the large sample of patients with ovarian cancer, allowing for the assessment of associations within histological subtypes as well as potential effect modification. Limitations of this research include the possibility of residual confounding, particularly due to the absence of information on treatment regimen and on comorbidities diagnosed after ovarian cancer diagnosis.

In conclusion, we did not observe evidence of the relationship between selected chronic diseases and OS and PFS among cases diagnosed with invasive epithelial ovarian carcinoma.

Supplementary Material

Refer to Web version on PubMed Central for supplementary material.

Authors

Albina N. Minlikeeva¹, Jo L. Freudenheim², Kevin H. Eng³, Rikki A. Cannioto¹, Grace Friel⁴, J.Brian Szender⁵, Brahm Segal^{6,7}, Kunle Odunsi^{5,8}, Paul Mayor⁵, Brenda Diergaarde⁹, Emese Zsiros⁸, Linda E. Kelemen¹⁰, Martin Köbel¹¹, Helen Steed¹², Anna de Fazio¹³ **on behalf of the Australian Ovarian Cancer Study Group**, Susan J Jordan¹⁴, Peter A. Fasching^{15,16}, Matthias W. Beckmann¹⁶, Harvey A. Risch¹⁷, Mary Anne Rossing¹⁸, Jennifer A. Doherty¹⁹, Jenny Chang-Claude^{20,21},

Marc T. Goodman²², Thilo Dörk²³, Robert Edwards^{24,25}, Francesmary Modugno^{24,25,26}, Roberta B. Ness²⁷, Keitaro Matsuo²⁸, Mika Mizuno²⁹, Beth Y. Karlan³⁰, Ellen L. Goode³¹, Susanne K. Kjær^{32,33}, Estrid Høgdall^{32,34}, Joellen M. Schildkraut³⁵, Kathryn L. Terry^{36,37}, Daniel W. Cramer^{36,37}, Elisa V. Bandera³⁸, Lisa E. Paddock^{39,40}, Lambertus A. Kiemeny⁴¹, Leon F.A.G. Massuger⁴², Rebecca Sutphen⁴³, Hoda Anton-Culver^{44,45}, Argyrios Ziogas⁴⁵, Usha Menon⁴⁶, Simon A. Gayther^{47,48}, Susan J. Ramus^{49,50}, Aleksandra Gentry-Maharaj⁵¹, Celeste L. Pearce^{52,53}, Anna H. Wu⁵³, Jolanta Kupryjanczyk⁵⁴, Allan Jensen³², Penelope M Webb¹⁴, and Kirsten B. Moysich^{1,2,7} **on behalf of the Ovarian Cancer Association Consortium**

Affiliations

¹Department of Cancer Prevention and Control, Roswell Park Cancer Institute, Buffalo, NY, USA ²Department of Epidemiology and Environmental Health, University at Buffalo, Buffalo, NY, USA ³Department of Biostatistics and Bioinformatics, Roswell Park Cancer Institute, Buffalo, NY, USA ⁴Independent Health, Buffalo, NY, USA ⁵Department of Surgery, Division of Gynecologic Oncology, Roswell Park Cancer Institute, Buffalo, NY, USA ⁶Department of Medicine, Roswell Park Cancer Institute, Buffalo, NY, USA ⁷Department of Immunology, Roswell Park Cancer Institute, Buffalo, NY, USA ⁸Center of Immunotherapy, Roswell Park Cancer Institute, Buffalo, NY, USA ⁹Department of Epidemiology, Graduate School of Public Health, University of Pittsburgh, and University of Pittsburgh Cancer Institute, Pittsburgh, PA, USA ¹⁰Department of Public Health Sciences, Medical University of South Carolina, Charleston, SC, USA ¹¹Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, University of Calgary, Foothills Medical Center, Calgary, Alberta, Canada ¹²Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Division of Gynecologic Oncology, Royal Alexandra Hospital, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada ¹³Department of Gynecological Oncology, Westmead Hospital and the Westmead Millennium Institute for Medical Research, The University of Sydney, Sydney, NSW, Australia ¹⁴Population Health Department, QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia ¹⁵University of California at Los Angeles, David Geffen School of Medicine, Department of Medicine, Division of Hematology and Oncology, Los Angeles, CA, USA ¹⁶Department of Gynecology and Obstetrics, Comprehensive Cancer Center Erlangen-EMN, Erlangen University Hospital, Friedrich Alexander University of Erlangen-Nuremberg, Erlangen, Germany ¹⁷Department of Chronic Disease Epidemiology, Yale School of Public Health, New Haven, CT, USA ¹⁸Program in Epidemiology, Division of Public Health Sciences, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, Seattle, WA, USA ¹⁹Department of Epidemiology, The Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth Medical, Hanover, NH, USA ²⁰Division of Cancer Epidemiology, German Cancer Research Cancer, Heidelberg, Germany ²¹University Cancer Center Hamburg (UCCH), University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf, Hamburg, Germany ²²Cancer Prevention and Control, Samuel Oschin Comprehensive Cancer Institute, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, Los Angeles, CA, USA ²³Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Hannover Medical School, Hannover, Lower Saxony, Germany ²⁴Division of

Gynecologic Oncology, Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Sciences, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, Pittsburgh, PA, USA
²⁵Ovarian Cancer Center of Excellence, Womens Cancer Research Program, Magee-Womens Research Institute and University of Pittsburgh Cancer Institute, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA ²⁶Department of Epidemiology, University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health, Pittsburgh, PA, USA ²⁷School of Public Health, The University of Texas, Houston, TX, USA ²⁸Division of Molecular Medicine, Aichi Cancer Center Research Institute, Nagoya, Japan ²⁹Department of Gynecological Oncology, Aichi Cancer Center Hospital, Nagoya, Aichi, Japan
³⁰Women's Cancer Program at the Samuel Oschin Comprehensive Cancer Institute, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, Los Angeles, CA, USA ³¹Department of Health Science Research, Division of Epidemiology, Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minnesota, USA ³²Department of Virus, Lifestyle and Genes, Danish Cancer Society Research Center, Copenhagen, Denmark ³³Department of Gynecology, Rigshospitalet, University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen, Denmark ³⁴Department of Pathology, Herlev Hospital, University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen, Denmark ³⁵Department of Public Health Sciences, School of Medicine, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA, USA ³⁶Obstetrics and Gynecology Epidemiology Center, Brigham and Women's Hospital, Boston, MA, USA ³⁷Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health, Boston, MA, USA ³⁸Cancer Prevention and Control Program, Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey, New Brunswick, NJ, USA ³⁹New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, Trenton, NJ, USA ⁴⁰School of Public Health, University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, Piscataway, NJ, USA ⁴¹Radboud University Medical Center, Radboud Institute for Health Sciences, Nijmegen, Netherlands ⁴²Radboud University Medical Center, Radboud Institute for Molecular Life sciences, Department of Gynaecology, Nijmegen, Netherlands ⁴³Epidemiology Center, College of Medicine, University of South Florida, Tampa, Florida, USA ⁴⁴Genetic Epidemiology Research Institute, UCI Center for Cancer Genetics Research & Prevention, School of Medicine, University of California Irvine, Irvine, California, USA ⁴⁵Department of Epidemiology, University of California Irvine, Irvine, California, USA ⁴⁶Women's Cancer, Institute for Women's Health, University College London, London, United Kingdom ⁴⁷Center for Cancer Prevention and Translational Genomics, Samuel Oschin Comprehensive Cancer Institute, Los Angeles, CA, USA ⁴⁸Department of Biomedical Sciences, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, Los Angeles, California, USA ⁴⁹School of Women's and Children's Health, University of New South Wales, Sydney, NSW, Australia ⁵⁰The Kinghorn Cancer Centre, Garvan Institute of Medical Research, Darlinghurst, NSW, Australia ⁵¹Women's Cancer, Institute for Women's Health, University College London, London, UK ⁵²Department of Epidemiology, University of Michigan School of Public Health, Ann Arbor, MI, USA ⁵³Department of Preventive Medicine, Keck School of Medicine, University of Southern California Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center, Los Angeles, CA, USA ⁵⁴Department of Pathology and Laboratory Diagnostics, The Maria Skłodowska-Curie Memorial Cancer Center and Institute of Oncology, Warsaw, Poland

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Abbreviations

OCAC	Ovarian Cancer Association Consortium
OS	overall survival
PFS	progression-free survival
BMI	body mass index

Table 1

Associations between history of selected comorbidities and overall and progression-free survival: Ovarian Cancer Association Consortium.

Comorbidity	Deceased		HR(95% CI) ^{1,2}	Progression		HR(95% CI) ^{1,2}
	Yes	No		Yes	No	
Endometriosis	No	4824	1.00(ref)	2554	1329	1.00(ref)
	Yes	571	0.92(0.84-1.01)	203	184	1.06(0.91-1.24)
Asthma	No	2117	1.00(ref)	1446	640	1.00(ref)
	Yes	125	1.00(0.84-1.20)	89	50	0.93(0.75-1.16)
Depression	No	2731	1.00(ref)	1669	741	1.00(ref)
	Yes	439	0.97(0.87-1.08)	202	98	0.90(0.76-1.07)
Osteoporosis	No	2043	1.00(ref)	1093	445	1.00(ref)
	Yes	170	0.95(0.81-1.12)	76	21	0.96(0.73-1.27)
Autoimmune disease	No	907	1.00(ref)	784	386	1.00(ref)
	Yes	242	0.94(0.73-1.22)	162	76	0.95(0.74-1.23)
Kidney disease	No	1739	1.00(ref)	1004	516	1.00(ref)
	Yes	48	1.19(0.89-1.60)	18	9	1.04(0.65-1.67)
Liver disease	No	2186	1.00(ref)	1485	664	1.00(ref)
	Yes	31	0.98(0.68-1.41)	15	10	0.86(0.54-1.38)
Gallbladder disease	No	2433	1.00(ref)	1483	645	1.00(ref)

Comorbidity	Deceased		HR(95% CI) ^{1,2}	Progression		HR(95% CI) ^{1,2}
	Yes	No		Yes	No	
Yes	438	205	1.06(0.96-1.18)	254	88	1.09(0.94-1.26)
Neurological disease						
No	1156	1031	1.00(ref)	547	250	1.00(ref)
Yes	17	11	1.32(0.79-2.21)	9	8	0.82(0.41-1.68)

¹ models adjusted for age (continuous), stage (localized, regional, or advanced), histology, and study site

² studies included for each comorbidity as presented in Supplemental Table 1