

Newsletter - December 2007

Ovarian Cancer and HRT

Our third major paper on hormone replacement therapy and cancer was published in April this year. This means we have analysed data on three major cancers in women – breast (published 2003), endometrial (published 2005) and now ovarian cancer – and we are beginning to build up a picture of the overall effects of different types of HRT on cancer risk.

We found a small increase in risk of incident and fatal ovarian cancer in women taking HRT – equivalent to about 1 extra cancer per 2500 women over 5 years – and no increased risk in past users. There was no difference between combined and oestrogen-only HRT for ovarian cancer; but because breast cancer is much more common, and is more strongly related to combined than to oestrogen-only HRT, overall women taking combined HRT are at higher risk for breast, endometrial and ovarian cancers combined than women taking oestrogen-only HRT.

Million Women Collaborators. Ovarian cancer and hormone-replacement therapy in the Million Women Study. *Lancet* 2007;369: 1703-10

New publications

As well as the paper on ovarian cancer, we have published 3 other papers using MWS data; on obesity and cancer:

Reeves G, Pirie K, Beral V, Green J, Spencer E, Bull D for the Million Women Study Collaborators. Cancer incidence and mortality in relation to body mass index in the Million Women Study: cohort study. *British Medical Journal*; DOI:10.1136/bmj.39367.495995.AE

(This paper can be found on line)

on height and weight and joint replacements:

Liu B, Balkwill A, Banks E, Cooper C, Green J, Beral V on behalf of the Million Women Study Collaborators. Relationship of height, weight and body mass index to the risk of hip and knee replacements in middle-aged women. *Rheumatology* May 2007; 46: 861-867

and a methodological paper comparing hospital records and self-reported disease incidence:

Liu B, Sweetland S, Beral V, Green J, Balkwill A, Casabonne D on behalf of the Million Women Study Collaborators. Self-reported information on joint replacement and cholecystectomy agrees well with that in medical records. *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology* 2007;60:1190-1194

Data from the Million Women Study has also been included in several collaborative publications on cervical cancer. Details of these publications can be found in the publications section of this website.

Blood collection for genetics

With the help of participants, GPs and practice nurses throughout the UK we have already collected over 24,000 blood samples and first genetic analyses are underway. This part of the study will continue for at least another 3 years (see Disease Susceptibility Study on the website).

Medical Research Council: continued funding

We are delighted to have been awarded a further 5 year grant from the MRC: this will fund further data collection and storage of blood samples and analyses of cardiovascular disease and other non-cancer outcomes

Collaborators' meeting

The next collaborators' meeting will be held in 2009 and not in 2008 as stated in our last newsletter.

End of the yellow era

In September 2007, we finished entering data from the first follow up questionnaires of the study. 862,035 women responded to the follow up questionnaire or yellow questionnaire, as it is known in the unit. These questionnaires were mailed initially in mid 1999 and the last mailing was in early 2005.

To mark this occasion we held a small celebration in the unit, this party also marked the semi-retirement of Barbara Crossley, one of our longest serving members of staff who manages our data entry staff and questionnaire entry in Oxford. A cake moulded and decorated in the shape of a questionnaire was made by two of the team. Barbara will continue to work on a part-time basis and can be contacted as usual on 01865 289625.

We have now moved onto entering data from the second follow up phase with the lilac questionnaires. All these questionnaires are displayed on this website.