

## Gynecologic oncology



<https://doi.org/10.56238/sevned2023.004-023>

### Júlia Bretas Borges Lopes

Student – Barbacena School of Medicine, Minas Gerais State.

### Karolayne Joyce Oliveira

Student – Barbacena School of Medicine, Minas Gerais State.

### Laís de Souza Almeida

Student – Barbacena School of Medicine, Minas Gerais State.

### Marcela Victoria Goulart Melo de Oliveira

Student – Barbacena School of Medicine, Minas Gerais State.

### ABSTRACT

Cancer is the main public health problem in the world, being one of the main causes of death and, therefore, one of the main barriers to increasing the life expectancy of women worldwide. In most countries, it is the first or second leading cause of premature death before the age of 70 in females. The impact of cancer incidence is rapidly increasing on the world stage, even with the increased information that social media makes available (SUNG *et al.*, 2021).

**Keywords:** Gynecologic, Cancer, Health.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Cancer is the main public health problem in the world, being one of the main causes of death and, therefore, one of the main barriers to increasing the life expectancy of women worldwide. In most countries, it is the first or second leading cause of premature death before the age of 70 in females. The impact of cancer incidence is rapidly increasing on the world stage, even with the increased information that social media makes available (SUNG *et al.*, 2021).

Gynecological cancer has been one of the most serious threats to women's lives, as it has a high incidence in Brazil and is one of the most relevant causes of death in the world. Cancer triggers devastating reactions both in the physical-biological and emotional spheres, causing feelings, imbalances and internal conflicts in the patient and everyone around her. In other words, cancer has a strong impact on the psychological and emotional aspects of affected patients (SILVA, 2019).

Gynecological oncology comprises the area of expertise specialized in the approach of pelvic tumors. Malignant tumors can originate in the ovaries, fallopian tubes, peritoneum (membrane that covers the pelvic and abdominal organs), uterus (uterine body, endometrium, and cervix), vagina, and vulva. Although access to preventive screening has increased and become more accessible, it has not been enough to reduce the trend of female mortality. The diagnosis, when not made previously, can bring several future complications to the patient. In this context, it is essential to develop actions that



articulate the spaces for promotion, prevention, and care, aimed at the recovery and maintenance of the health of individuals with information about this disease (ANTURI, 2020).

Thus, the main objective of this study was to show the importance of gynecological oncology in the treatment of cancer of the female reproductive system. Thus, also showing the fundamental role of the gynecological oncologist in the early treatment of malignant pelvic tumors.

The present study is an integrative literature review, carried out in July and completed in August 2023, through searches in the online databases: Google Scholar, Scielo and PubMed. The following descriptors were used: Cancer, Health and Prevention. From this search, 15 articles were found, which were later submitted to the selection criteria.

The inclusion criteria were: articles in English and Portuguese; published in the period from 2018 to 2023 and that addressed the themes proposed for this research, studies of the type (review, meta-analysis), made available in full. The exclusion criteria were: duplicate articles, available in the form of abstracts, that did not directly address the proposal studied and that did not meet the other inclusion criteria proposed.

After the selection criteria, 11 articles remained that were submitted to thorough reading for data collection. The results were presented in a descriptive way, divided into thematic categories addressing: describe the subheadings or points that were mentioned in the discussion on the theme addressed.

Several studies on gynecologic oncology can be found in the literature. Thus, Gynecology Oncology is a recognized specialty in the United States since 1969, which has resulted in a significant improvement in outcomes in women with gynecological cancer. This professional should conduct clinical and/or surgical treatment of malignant neoplasms of the female genital tract and practice Gynecology Oncology in a multidisciplinary context. Their training should be directed to gynecological cancer, with specific knowledge about pathophysiology, tumor biology, pathology, radiotherapy, chemotherapy, and palliative care. This professional needs targeted training for the acquisition of advanced surgical skills (LOPES, 2021).

Training in Gynecology Oncology is demanding, demands time, resources, and dedication in specialized centers. New technologies are constantly being incorporated and new paradigms are being incorporated into protocols in an increasingly faster manner. The training time is much longer than the few weeks of specific training included in the medical residency programs in Obstetrics and Gynecology, which are insufficient for graduates to provide adequate care to women with gynecological cancer (MAGALHÃES *et al.*, 2018).

Gynecological oncology in the treatment of cancers of the female reproductive system and brings with it specialists who have extensive training in the diagnosis and treatment of the most diverse



types of cancers that can affect women, including: ovarian cancer, uterine cancer, vaginal cancer, cervical cancer and vulvar cancer (MARTINHO *et al.*, 2020).

Cervical cancer is the most frequent malignant tumor in the female pelvis, with more than 15000 cases diagnosed each year in Brazil. This is because this disease is related to infection by the human papillomavirus (HPV) that can be easily found when the patient undergoes Pap smears or more commonly called a preventive exam. This disease progresses in stages, passing through precursor lesions called CIN (cervical intraepithelial neoplasms) 1, 2 and 3. It becomes invasive only after going through these stages, which can take up to 10 years to occur. The most common symptoms of this type of cancer are recorded as bloody discharge and bleeding during sexual intercourse. Thus, the patient who has these symptoms should undergo a preventive exam, which is the most effective screening method for this type of disease (ANTURI, 2020).

Endometrial cancer is also among the most frequent cancers among women. This cancer is generated from a malignant tumor. Cure rates for this type of cancer are very high when it is diagnosed in its early stage and with proper treatment. In this type of cancer, the symptoms that may indicate that something is wrong are vaginal bleeding in women and in premenopause, which is often accompanied by thickening of the inner layer of the uterus, called the endometrium. It is important to note that the Pap smear or preventive test is not effective in preventing endometrial cancer. For this type, the most indicated for the discovery is pelvic/transvaginal ultrasonography that evaluates the thickness of the endometrium, in this way it is possible to guide the patient if she has any abnormality during the examination (MAGALHÃES *et al.*, 2018).

The third cancer that most affects women is ovarian cancer, which is responsible for 6000 diagnoses in Brazil. This is the most lethal tumor in the gynecological sphere. This fact is due to an effective and more accurate screening, thus, patients diagnosed with this type of cancer only receive a diagnosis when the disease is already in its advanced stage, thus hindering the chances of successful treatment.

## 2 STATISTICS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES

Cervical cancer was the fourth most frequent cancer in women worldwide, with an estimated 604,000 new cases, representing 6.5% of all cancers in women. This value corresponds to an estimated risk of 13.30 cases per 100 thousand women, and the highest incidence rates were estimated for countries on the African continent (FERLAY *et al.*, 2021; SUNG *et al.*, 2021).

In terms of mortality in Brazil, in 2020, there were 6,627 deaths, and the crude mortality rate from cervical cancer was 6.12 deaths per 100 thousand women. The development of effective HPV vaccination and screening programs has made cervical cancer a largely preventable disease. In 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced a goal to accelerate the elimination of cervical



cancer as a public health problem to reduce the incidence below the threshold of four cases per 100,000 women per year in all countries by 2030 (BRASIL, 2022).

Known cofactors associated with disease progression include human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection and other immunosuppressive conditions such as smoking, multiparity, and long-term use of oral contraceptives (WILD *et al.*, 2020).

Currently, gynecological cervical cancer is eligible for eradication through vaccination against the most prevalent oncogenic HPV types and screening and treatment of precursor lesions. The global strategy proposed by the World Health Organization (WHO) to accelerate the elimination of the disease as a public health problem includes the following targets, which must be achieved by 2030: 90% of girls fully vaccinated against HPV by the age of 15; 70% of women undergo a high-performance screening test at age 35 and 45; and 90% of women identified with precursor lesions and cancer receiving treatment (FERLAY *et al.*, 2021; SUNG *et al.*, 2021).

This study indicates that the earlier gynecologic cancer treatment is started, the more effective the outcome will be. Therefore, it also made it possible to understand the importance of gynaecological oncology in these treatments. It also showed that the cancer that most affects women is cervical cancer, about 15000 diagnoses per year.

However, other cancers are also known to lead to the death of female patients, such as ovarian cancer, uterine cancer, vaginal cancer, cervical cancer, and vulvar cancer. However, with the appropriate and correct treatment at the beginning of the diagnosis, it is of paramount importance for the patient to have the best chances of cure. Thus, several medical studies prove that an untimely or clumsy approach by a professional who is not properly experienced in the area can compromise the patient's oncological safety and reduce the expectations of cure for this type of cancer.

It is concluded, then, that gynecological oncology, with its specialized approach to the treatment of cancers treated in its initial phase, the chances of cure are enormous. Currently, the search for preventive exams has increased in Brazil, thus making the detection and treatment of diseases to be detected at the beginning, there is still a portion of the.



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