

EVIDENCE IN THE MAKING

PUTTING A PRICE ON CANCER CARE

Analyzing the Costs and Benefits of Different Treatments for Stomach Cancer

THE CHALLENGE

Gastric cancer is the second leading cause of cancer deaths in the world. There are different approaches to treating the disease, but little research has been done to assess the relative costs and benefits of these strategies. Dr. Natalie Coburn of Sunnybrook Hospital's Odette Cancer Centre in Toronto believes physicians should be informed about the costs of caring for stomach cancer – especially when two different approaches may yield similar results. "If one treatment costs significantly less and has the same results, shouldn't physicians know that when they are making their decisions? That's a pretty important question," says Dr. Coburn, who leads a CIHR-funded economic evaluation of interventions for gastric cancer.

Research: The study builds on a massive Canadian Cancer Society project led by Dr. Coburn that examined interventions in stomach cancer. She is now examining case studies of 1,300 Ontario patients who received different treatments to evaluate their health outcomes, the treatment costs and the quality of life of the patients. She hopes to include the costs to the patients and their families – such as time lost from employment – in her evaluation.

Sources: Coburn, N.G. "Current Issues in Gastric Cancer." *Gastric Cancer*, 15, Suppl 1, (Sept. 2012): S1-167.

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