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Evidence-based Series 4-9 Version 2

A Quality Initiative of the
Program in Evidence-based Care (PEBC), Cancer Care Ontario (CCO)

Follow-up after Primary Therapy for Endometrial Cancer

Members of the Gynecology Cancer Disease Site Group

An assessment conducted in November 2023 deferred the review of Evidence-Based Series (EBS) 4-9 Version 2. This means that the document remains current until it is assessed again next year. The PEBC has a formal and standardized process to ensure the currency of each document (PEBC Assessment & Review Protocol)

EBS 4-9 Version 2 is comprised of 4 sections. You can access the summary and full report here:

https://www.cancercareontario.ca/en/guidelines-advice/types-of-cancer/616

Section 1: Clinical Practice Guideline
Section 2: Systematic Review
Section 3: Guideline Development and External Review
Section 4: Document Review and Summary Tool

Release Date: June 12, 2017

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or contact the PEBC office at:
Phone: 905-527-4322 ext. 42822 Fax: 905-526-6775 E-mail: ccopgi@mcmaster.ca

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Guideline Report History

Systematic Review			Publications	Notes and Key changes
Guideline Version	**Search dates**	**Data**		
Original Version January 10 2006	January 1980 to October 2005	Full Report	Web publication	N/A
Current Version 2 June 12 2017	November 2005 to November 25, 2016	New Data found in Section 4: Document Review and Summary Tool	Updated Web publication	2006 recommendations are ENDORSED

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Evidence-based Series 4-9 Version 2: Section 1

Follow-up after Primary Therapy for Endometrial Cancer: A Clinical Practice Guideline

M. Fung-Kee-Fung, J. Dodge, L. Elit, H. Lukka, A. Chambers, T. Oliver, and the Gynecology Cancer Disease Site Group

A Quality Initiative of the
Program in Evidence-Based Care, Cancer Care Ontario.
Developed by the Provincial Gynecology Cancer Disease Site Group

June 12, 2017

SUMMARY

These guideline recommendations have been ENDORSED, which means that the recommendations are still current and relevant for decision making. Please see Section 4: Document Review Summary and Tool for a summary of updated evidence published between 2005 and 2016, and for details on how this Clinical Practice Guideline was ENDORSED.

Question

What is the most appropriate strategy for the follow-up of patients with endometrial cancer who are clinically disease free after receiving potentially curative primary treatment? Specifically, do differences in follow-up intervals, diagnostic interventions, clinical setting, or specialty influence patient outcomes related to local or distant recurrence, survival, or quality of life?

Target Population

Women without evidence of disease after primary potentially curative treatment for any stage of endometrial cancer comprise the target population. Of particular interest are outcomes from follow-up strategies reported for patients at a lower risk of recurrence (i.e., stage IA or IB, grade 1 or 2) and those at a higher risk of recurrence (i.e., stage IA or IB, grade 3, or stage IC or advanced stage).

Recommendations

There is a lack of randomized controlled trial evidence related to the clinical questions. Based on the interpretation of evidence from retrospective studies and expert consensus opinion, the Gynecology Cancer Disease Site Group recommends the following:

- It is recommended that all patients receive counselling about the potential symptoms of recurrence of endometrial cancer, because the majority of recurrences in the identified studies were symptomatic.
  - Symptomatic signs of possible recurrence can include, but are not limited to, unexplained vaginal bleeding or discharge, detection of a mass, abdominal distension, persistent pain, especially in the abdomen or pelvic region, fatigue, diarrhea, nausea or vomiting, persistent cough, swelling, or weight loss.
- The most appropriate follow-up strategy is likely one based upon the risk of recurrence, with individual patient preferences for more or less follow-up taken into account.
  - For patients at a surgically or pathologically confirmed low risk of recurrence (i.e., stage IA or IB, grade 1 or 2): A general examination, including a complete history and a pelvic-rectal examination, conducted semi-annually or annually for the first three years and annually for the next two years.
  - For patients at high risk of recurrence (i.e., stage IA or IB, grade 3, or stage IC or advanced stage). A general examination, including a complete history and a pelvic-rectal examination, every three to six months for the first three years and semi-annually for the next two years.
- Since the majority of patients with recurrence were symptomatic and virtually all recurred within five years, it seems reasonable that patients return to annual population-based general physical and pelvic examination after five years of recurrence-free follow-up.
- There is insufficient evidence to inform the optimum clinical setting or type of specialist required for follow-up; however, it is recommended that all patients be followed by a health care professional who is knowledgeable about the natural history of the disease, and who is comfortable performing speculum and pelvic exams, in order to diagnose or detect a local (vaginal) recurrence.
  - If a patient is initially followed by a specialist, it seems reasonable that they be followed by a qualified general practitioner after three to five years of recurrence-free follow-up.
- It is recommended that all patients undergo a targeted investigation to rule out recurrence if symptomatic, since patients with local recurrence are potentially curable with further therapy.
- There is insufficient evidence to inform the routine use of Pap smear, chest x-ray, abdominal ultrasound, computed tomography (CT) scan or CA 125 testing to detect asymptomatic recurrences.
- Where treatment with radiotherapy is involved, it is recommended that patients be counselled on the potential adverse effects of radiotherapy. Adverse effects associated with radiotherapy can include complications with the rectum, urinary bladder, vagina, skin, subcutaneous tissue, bones, and other sites.

Key Evidence

- Sixteen non-comparative retrospective studies provided the evidence basis for this report. Twelve studies evaluated follow-up programs, while four studies evaluated the role of the tumour-marker cancer antigen (CA) 125 in detecting disease recurrence.
- In 12 studies, overall (local and distant) recurrence rates ranged from 8% to 19%, with a weighted mean of 13% (95% confidence interval [CI]; 11%-14%). In four studies that categorized patients by risk of recurrence, recurrence rates ranged from 1% to 3% for low-risk patients and 5% to 16% for high-risk patients.

- In 12 studies, 41% to 100% of all recurrences were symptomatic, the weighted mean being 77% (95% CI; 74%-81%).
- In 9 studies, 68% to 100% of recurrences occurred within approximately three years of follow-up.
- The number of asymptomatic patients with recurrences detected by a routine follow-up test alone was not consistently reported; however, with the available data, as a percentage of total recurrences:
  - Seven studies reported 5% to 33% of recurrences were detected by physical examination,
  - Four studies reported 0% to 4% of recurrences were detected by Pap smear,
  - Six studies reported 0% to 14% of recurrences were detected by chest x-ray,
  - Two studies reported 4% and 13% of recurrences were detected by abdominal ultrasound,
  - Two studies reported 5% and 21% of recurrences were detected by CT scan, and
  - One study reported 15% of recurrences in selected patients were detected by CA-125 level.

Contact Information
For further information about this series, please contact the authors through the PEBC via:
Phone: 905-527-4322 ext. 42822 Fax: 905-526-6775 E-mail: ccopgi@mcmaster.ca

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Evidence-based Series 4-9 Version 2: Section 2

Follow-up after Primary Therapy for Endometrial Cancer: A Systematic Review

M. Fung-Kee-Fung, J. Dodge, L. Elit, H. Lukka, A. Chambers, T. Oliver, and the Gynecology Cancer Disease Site Group

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Program in Evidence-based Care, Cancer Care Ontario.
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These guideline recommendations have been ENDORSED, which means that the recommendations are still current and relevant for decision making. Please see Section 4: Document Review Summary and Tool for a summary of updated evidence published between 2005 and 2016, and for details on how this Clinical Practice Guideline was ENDORSED

Section Date: January 10, 2006

QUESTION(S)

What is the most appropriate strategy for the follow-up of patients with endometrial cancer who are clinically disease-free after receiving potentially curative primary treatment? Specifically, do differences in follow-up intervals, diagnostic interventions, clinical setting, or specialty influence patient outcomes related to local or distant recurrence, survival, or quality of life?

INTRODUCTION

Endometrial cancer, the most common gynecologic malignancy, accounts for 3,700 new cases a year in Canada, with 1,450 occurring in Ontario (1). The disease presentation is such that the majority of cases are clinically stage I or II with a case fatality ratio of approximately 0.19 or 19% of patients in patients (1). Treatment for stage I or II endometrial cancer generally includes a total abdominal hysterectomy and bilateral salpingo-oophorectomy with or without pelvic and/or para-aortic lymphadenectomy. Surgical pathologic factors that predict survival and disease recurrence include tumour grade, histology, depth of myometrial invasion, presence of lymph node metastasis, and the presence of extrauterine disease (2). Patients who are deemed to be at a higher risk for recurrence (i.e., stage IA or IB, grade 3, or stage IC or advanced stage) may receive postoperative adjuvant radiation therapy in the form of vaginal vault brachytherapy, pelvic external-beam radiation therapy, or other modalities. Randomized trials have shown that in early stage endometrial cancer adjuvant pelvic radiotherapy improves local-regional control but does not improve overall survival (3,4).

The anatomic locations of recurrences are roughly equivalent between local (pelvic) and distant (abdominal and chest) (3-6), with the most common sites being the vaginal vault, pelvis, intra-abdominal region, and lungs (7). There is some controversy surrounding the salvage rate among patients who recur. Published salvage rates range from 10% to 38% (7,8). Radiation also seems to affect the pattern of recurrence—women who receive radiation therapy seem to have fewer local recurrences but not fewer distant recurrences than women (in similar risk categories) who do not receive radiation therapy (3-6).

The concept of long-term surveillance of patients treated with curative intent is based on the premise that early detection will result in decreased morbidity and mortality. At present, follow-up protocols to date that have been used in this population have been highly variable, utilizing a number of tests at a variety of intervals (7). There are no formal recommendations regarding the optimal program for monitoring patients. The primary aim of this series is to outline, if possible, an optimal program for following patients based on previously published evidence. Specific components of such a program to be addressed would include optimal intervals for follow-up, optimal location for follow-up (cancer centres, local gynaecologist, etc.), accuracy of the surveillance tests presently being done, and modification of the follow-up program based on an individual patient's risk of recurrence.

METHODS

This systematic review was developed by Cancer Care Ontario's Program in Evidence-Based Care (PEBC). Evidence was selected and reviewed by members of the PEBC Gynecology Cancer Disease Site Group (DSG) and methodologists.

This systematic review is a convenient and up-to-date source of the best available evidence on the follow-up of patients after potentially curative primary therapy for endometrial cancer. The body of evidence in this review is comprised of retrospective data. That evidence, combined with expert consensus, forms the basis of a clinical practice guideline developed by the Provincial Gynecology Cancer DSG. The systematic review and companion practice guideline are intended to promote evidence-based practice in Ontario, Canada. The PEBC is editorially independent of Cancer Care Ontario and the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

Literature Search Strategy

The literature was searched using MEDLINE (OVID: 1980 through October 2005), EMBASE (OVID: 1980 through October 2005), the Cochrane Library (OVID: Issue 3, 2005), the Canadian Medical Association Infobase, and the National Guideline Clearinghouse. In addition, the proceedings of the meetings of the American Society of Clinical Oncology (1999-2005) and the American Society for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology (1999-2003) were searched for relevant abstracts. Reference lists of papers that were eligible for inclusion in the systematic review were scanned for additional citations.

The literature search of the electronic databases combined disease-specific terms (uterine neoplasms/ or cervical neoplasms/ or endometrial neoplasms/ or (cervix or endometrium or endometrial and cancer or carcinoma)) and (surveillance.ti. or follow$.ti. or strategy.ti. or routine.ti.) for the following study designs: practice guidelines, systematic reviews, meta-analyses, randomized controlled trials, non-randomized comparative cohort studies, prospective single-cohort studies, and retrospective single-cohort studies.

Study Selection Criteria

Articles were selected for inclusion in the evidence series if they reported data on follow-up strategies for patients who had received curative treatment for endometrial cancer and who were clinically disease-free at study point. Specifically, studies were to describe the follow-up program, define the entry criteria for the study population, and report outcome data on survival, the number of recurrences found during screening, or on patient preferences. Case reports, letters, editorials,

and papers published in a language other than English were not considered for inclusion in the systematic review of the evidence.

In the absence of randomized controlled trials, in order of preference, comparative cohort studies, prospective single-cohort studies, and retrospective single-cohort studies were deemed eligible for inclusion. Practice guidelines, meta-analyses, or systematic reviews explicitly based on evidence related to the guideline question were also eligible for inclusion in the systematic review.

Synthesizing the Evidence

The recurrence rates of the non-comparative trials were pooled using the formula PRR = $\sum(w_i RR_i) / \sum w_i$, where PRR is the pooled recurrence rate of the studies, w_i is the weight of the i^{th} study, and RR_i is the response rate of the i^{th} study. RR was calculated by dividing the number of recurrences by the total number of patients in a study. 'w' was determined by the inverse of the variance for a study, with the variance calculated by multiplying the proportion of patients with a recurrence by the proportion of patients with no recurrence, and then dividing the result by the total number of patients in the study. The 95% confidence interval (95% CI) for each PRR was calculated by the formula PRR ± $1.96SE_{PRR}$, where $SE_{PRR} = \sqrt{(1/\sum w_i)}$ (9).

RESULTS

Literature Search Results

Sixteen retrospective studies were identified and deemed eligible for inclusion in the summary of the evidence (10-25). Twelve studies (10-21) evaluated follow-up programs, while the remaining four studies evaluated the role of the tumour-marker cancer antigen (CA) 125 in detecting disease recurrence (22-25). In addition to the 16 retrospective studies identified, two systematic reviews (26,27) based upon similar retrospective data were also identified and considered eligible for review. The study characteristics and results of the twelve retrospective studies of follow-up programs are summarized in Tables 1 through 5 (10-21).

Table 1. Description of participants in follow-up studies.

Author Year (Ref)	# of pts.	Surgical stage (% patients)			Histologic grade (% patients)			Lymph node dissection (% patients)	Adjuvant radiotherapy (% patients)
		I	II	III-IV	1	2	3		
Morice 2001 (10)	351	71%	20%	8%	38%	55%	8%	77%	43%
Owen 1996 (11)	97	86%	2%	11%		NR		27%	23%
Gadducci 2000 (12)	133	81%	8%	11%	48%	35%	17%	47%	64%
Agboola 1997 (13)	432	79%	15%	5%	59%	28%	11%	NR	NR
Gordon 1997 (14)	111	82%	7%	11%		NR		14%	50%
Ng 1997 (15)	86	64%	12%	13%		NR		NR	NR
Salvesen 1997 (16)	249	83%	8%	9%	47%	38%	15%	NR	73%
Berchuck 1995 (17)	354	100%		0%	45%	41%	14%	55%	NR
Reddoch 1995 (18)	398		NR			NR		NR	NR
Shumsky 1994 (19)	317	82%	11%	7%		NR		NR	NR
Podczaski 1992 (20)	300		NR		54%	31%	15%	56%	49%
MacDonald 1990 (21)	101		NR			NR		NR	34%

Note: Ref, Reference; # of pts., number of patients; NR, not reported.

Outcomes

Before it is possible to establish the optimal intervals for follow-up for patients who have been treated for endometrial cancer, it is important to determine the time frame for when recurrences tend to occur and the survival for women who have recurrences.

Detection of Disease Recurrence

Recurrent disease discovered during follow-up is summarized in Table 2. When the data were pooled across the studies, there was an overall recurrence rate of 13% (95% CI, 11%-14%) with 77% (95% CI, 74% -81%) of recurrences associated with symptoms. In regard to the pooled data on symptomatic recurrences, the study by Macdonald et al (21) likely skews the results somewhat, since all the patients in that study were symptomatic. If removed from the analysis, the rate of symptomatic recurrences becomes 70% (95% CI, 65%-75%), and the rate of asymptomatic recurrences becomes 30% (95% CI, 25%-34%), While there may be some variation in the interpretation of the results, the pooled data shows that approximately 70% or more of all recurrences were symptomatic. The actual range of symptomatic recurrences fell between 41% and 100% of all recurrences reported in the 12 studies. The pooled data also indicated that 61% (95%

CI, 56%-65%) of recurrences involved distant metastases, the range being 38% to 86%. The majority of recurrences were detected by approximately three years or less of follow-up, with the range being 68% to 100%.

In four studies data, it was possible to determine recurrence outcome by high or low risk of recurrence (10,12,17,18). There were varying definitions of risk across studies; however, in each case, patients at a lower risk of recurrence had fewer recurrences than patients at a higher risk of recurrence. One study (16), reported that no asymptomatic recurrences were detected among 160 women considered to be at low risk (<60 years, stage IA/IB disease). In the remaining studies, for patients at a low risk of recurrence, the actual recurrence rate was 3% or less of the total number of recurrences.

Table 2. Disease recurrence rates, characteristics, and timing of disease recurrence.

Author Year (Ref)	# of pts.	Patients with recurrent disease # (%)						Median follow-up months (range)	Median time to recurrence months (range)	Recurrences diagnosed after surgery (years)	
		Low risk[a]	High risk[a]	Symptomatic	Asymptomatic	Local	Distant			% recurrences	Years from surgery
Morice 2001 (10)	351	9 (3%)	18 (5%)	22 (81%)	5 (19%)	7 (26%)	20 (74%)	42 (12-137)	22 (5-67)	85% 100%	3 5.6
Owen 1996 (11)	97	17 (18%)		11 (65%)	6 (35%)	8 (47%)	9 (53%)	>120 (NR)	NR (NR)	82%	2
Gadducci 2000 (12)	133	3 (2%)	21 (16%)	11 (46%)	13 (54%)	6 (25%)	18 (75%)	53 (16-125)	18 (6-64)	100%	5.3
Agboola 1997 (13)	432	50 (12%)		30 (60%)	20 (40%)	19 (38%)	31 (62%)	55 (3-138)	19 (3-194)	80%	3
Gordon 1997 (14)	111	17 (15%)		13 (76%)	4 (24%)	5 (29%)	12 (71%)	NR (NR)	21[d], 8 [e] (NR)	100%	5
Ng 1997 (15)	86	14 (17%)		12 (86%)	2 (14%)	2 (14%)	12 (86%)	26 (3-90)	NR (NR)	NR	NR
Salvesen 1997 (16)	249	47 (19%)		42 (89%)	5 (11%)	15 (32%)	32 (68%)	108 (48-192)	NR (NR)	68%	2
Berchuck 1995 (17)	354	12 (3%)	32 (9%)	27 (61%)	17 (39%)	24 (55%)	20 (45%)	>60 (NR)	NR (NR)	82%	3
Reddoch 1995 (18)	398	1 (1%)	38 (10%)	16 (41%)	23 (59%)	15 (38%)	24 (62%)	64 (NR)	15 (NR)	100%	3.2
Shumsky 1994 (19)	317	53 (16%)		40 (75%)	13 (25%)	25c (47%)	28c (53%)	≤ 120 (NR)	18[b] (3-110)[b]	70% 86%[b]	3 5
Podczaski 1992 (20)	300	47 (16%)		23 (49%)	24 (51%)	29 (62%)	18 (38%)	56 (NR)	13 (2-125)	70%	2
MacDonald 1990 (21)	101	19 (19%)		19 (100%)	0 (0%)	NR (NR)	NR (NR)	NR (NR)	NR (NR)	89% 100%	3 5
Pooled data (95% CI)	Total 2922	13% (11% - 14%)		77% (74% - 81%)	23% (19% - 26%	39% (35%-44%)	61% (56%-65%)	--	--	--	

Note: Ref, reference; # of pts., number of patients; CI, confidence interval; NR, not reported.
[a] Definitions for risk recurrence outlined in Table 1.
[b] Estimated by reviewer from survival curve.
[c] 6 patients were diagnosed with both local and distant disease.
[d] Syptomatic
[e] Asymptomatic

Survival

The details provided by the retrospective studies regarding survival varied considerably. The most relevant and consistent survival outcome reported was patient survival by symptomatic or asymptomatic disease recurrence. One study (14) reported that, of the 17 recurrences, four were asymptomatic and 13 symptomatic, and a significant survival advantage was seen in patients who were asymptomatic at the time of recurrence (p=0.048). Those results must be interpreted with caution given the retrospective study design and the fact that the analysis was based upon a small sample of 17 patients with recurrence. Five studies reported no differences in survival (11,12,13,19) or recurrence-free survival (16) between patients with symptomatic or asymptomatic recurrences. The remaining studies did not report data for that outcome (10,15,17,18,20,21).

Six studies reported additional information on survival outcomes (10,12,13,17,18,20). Morice et al (10) reported that, among the 27 patients with recurrences, 19 patients had died, six patients were alive with disease progression, and one patient was alive without disease after a median of 12.2 months. One patient with disease recurrence was lost to follow-up.

Gadducci et al (12) reported that survival after recurrence was not related to the initial stage of disease, tumour grade, or myometrial invasion. They did report that survival was longer for women who were diagnosed with a recurrence after 17.5 months compared to women who were diagnosed with a recurrence prior to that time.

The study by Agboola et al (13) reported that 35 of the 50 women who had recurrences had died by the time of analysis. The median follow-up was 54.5 months. The median survival after recurrence was 9.5 months.

Berchuck et al (17) reported that eight of the 44 women with recurrences were alive without evidence of disease. None of the women with poorly differentiated disease recovered from her disease recurrence (0/10), while 33% of the women with well-differentiated (4/12) and 18% of the women with moderately differentiated disease (4/22) recovered from their recurrences. Women with isolated vaginal recurrences were more likely to survive than were women with other patterns of recurrence (p=0.01).

Reddoch et al (18) reported that, of the 39 recurrences detected, after a median follow-up of 64 months, 30 of the women had died of disease, six women were alive with disease, and three women were alive without signs of disease.

Podczaski et al (20) reported that women with recurrences detected soon after treatment fared more poorly than women whose recurrences were detected later after treatment. In addition, they reported that women who did not receive postoperative radiation therapy had a greater one-year actuarial survival than women who did receive radiation therapy (54% versus 37%). The results of those comparisons must be interpreted cautiously because the study was retrospective, and the women who received radiation therapy were more likely to have a poorer prognosis than the women who did not receive radiation therapy.

Intervals for Follow-up

The intensity of follow-up among the programs varied (Table 3). Over the first five years after primary potentially curative therapy, four studies reported fewer than 12 visits (10,11,14,16), six studies reported follow-up protocols ranging from 12 to 14 visits (12,13,17,19-21), one study reported 15 routine follow-up visits (18), and one study (15) reported the most intensive follow-up program with 20 to 32 visits. Interestingly, the rate of patients with symptomatic recurrence in that study was 86% of all recurrences detected.

The duration of follow-up at a gynecology clinic was completed after five years in four studies (14,17,18,21), and in two studies, follow-up continued for an additional five (11) or eight (16) years beyond year five. One study did not report duration of follow-up past year five (15). Of the five remaining studies, four performed annual follow-up (10,12,13,20), and one performed semi-annual follow-up (19) on an ongoing basis from the sixth year on.

Table 3. Timing of routine follow-up visits.

Author Year (Ref)	Number of follow-up visits per year						
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total (Year 1 to 5)	Year 6+
Morice 2001 (10)	4	3	2	1	1	**11**	1
Owen 1996 (11)	3-4	2	1	1	1	**8-9**	1 to year 11
Gadducci 2000 (12)	3-4	3-4	2	2	2	**12-14**	1
Agboola 1997 (13)	4	3	2	2	2	**13**	1
Gordon 1997 (14)	4	2	1	1	1	**9**	NFF
Ng 1997 (15)	6-12	6-12	4	2	2	**20-32**	NR
Salvesen 1997 (16)	4	2	1	1	1	**9**	1 to year 13
Berchuck 1995 (17)	4	3	3	2	2	**14**	NFF
Reddoch 1995 (18)	4	4	3	2	2	**15**	NFF
Shumsky 1994 (19)	4	3	2	2	2	**13**	2
Podczaski 1992 (20)	4	4	2	2	2	**14**	1
MacDonald 1990 (21)	4	2	2	2	2	**12**	NFF

Note. Ref, reference; NFF, no further follow-up; NR not reported.

Tests used routinely as part of follow-up programs

As seen in Table 4, the most commonly performed tests used to detect endometrial cancer recurrences were physical exams, vaginal vault cytology, chest x-rays, ultrasound, and CT scans. Of these, the most common tests were physical exam and vaginal vault cytology.

Table 4. Tests used routinely as part of follow-up programs*

Author Year (Ref)	Routine Follow-up Tests					
	Physical exam	Vaginal vault cytology	Chest x-ray	Abdominal-pelvic ultrasound	Abdominal-pelvic CT scan	CA 125
Morice 2001 (10)	Yes	Yes	Yes[a]	Yes[a]	No	No
Owen 1996 (11)	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Gadducci 2000 (12)	Yes	Yes	Yes[b]	Yes	Yes[a]	No
Agboola 1997 (13)	Yes	Yes	Yes[a]	No	No	No
Gordon 1997 (14)	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Ng 1997 (15)	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Salvesen 1997 (16)	Yes	Yes	Yes[a]	No	No	No
Reddoch 1995 (17)	Yes	Yes	Yes[a]	No	No	No
Berchuck 1995 (18)	Yes	Yes	Yes[a]	No	No	No
Shumsky 1994 (19)	Yes	Yes	Yes[c]	No	No	No
Podczaski 1992 (20)	Yes	Yes[d]	Yes[a]	No	No	No
MacDonald 1990 (21)	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No

Note: * administered according to the schedules in Table 4, unless noted otherwise, Ref, reference, CT computed tomography
[a] annually
[b] semi-annually for 2 years, then annually for 3 years
[c] bi-annually
[d] semi-annually

All of the follow-up programs included physical examination and vaginal vault cytology at every visit, with the exception of the study by Podczaski et al (20) where a sample for cytology was obtained at every other visit in the first two years of follow-up. In one study (15), patients were followed up with physical exam and vaginal vault cytology for up to 12 times a year for the first two years. Chest x-rays were performed as part of a follow-up program in eight studies (10,1213,16,17-20), and not included as part of follow-up in four studies (11,14,15,21). The follow-up schedule for routine testing with chest-x-ray was semi-annually in one study (19), annually in six studies (10,13,16,18-20), and bi-annually in one study (19). The use of ultrasound, CT scan, or CA 125 testing was generally not employed as part of routine testing in the studies identified. Two studies used abdominal-pelvic ultrasound scanning for routine follow-up (10,12); in one of these, annual abdominal-pelvic computed tomography (CT) scans were also performed (12).

What is the accuracy of the surveillance tests presently being used to follow up patients who have been treated for endometrial cancer?

Detection rates for individual tests were available from the reports of seven studies (Table 5). Where possible, recurrences associated with symptoms at the time of the positive follow-up tests were excluded from those data. Recurrences detected during incidental testing between follow-up visits were also excluded. The detection of asymptomatic recurrences ranged from 5% to 33% of patients with physical examination, 0% to 4% with vaginal vault cytology, 0% to 14% with chest x-ray, 4% to 13% with abdominal ultrasound, 5% to 21% with abdominal/pelvic CT scan, and 15% in selected patients with CA 125.

Table 5. Detection rates for follow-up tests.

Author Year (Ref)	# of women with recurrent disease (%)	# women with asymptomatic recurrent disease (% recurrences)	# asymptomatic women with recurrence found by follow-up test at a screening visit (% of total recurrences)					
			Physical exam	Vaginal vault cytology	Chest x-ray	Abdominal ultrasound	CT scan	CA 125
Morice 2001 (10)	27 (8%)	5 (19%) [a]	3 (11%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (4%)	--	--
Owen 1996 (11)	17 (18%)	6 (35%)	--	--	--	--	--	--
Gadducci 2000 (12)	24 (18%)	13 (54%)	3 (13%)	1 (4%)	1 (4%)	3 (13%)	5 (21%)	--
Agboola 1997 (13)	50 (12%)	20 (40%) [b]	13 (26%)	2 (4%)	7 (14%)	--	--	--
Gordon 1997 (14)	17 (15%)	4 (24%)	--	--	--	--	--	--
Ng 1997 (15)	14 (17%)	2 (14%)	1 (7%)	0 (0%)	1 (7%)	-	-	-
Salvesen 1997 (16)	47 (19%)	5 (11%)	--	--	--	--	--	--
Reddoch 1995 (17)	39 (11%)	23 (59%)	13 (33%)	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	--	2 (5%)	6 (15%)
Berchuck 1995 (18)	44 (12%)	17 (39%)	--	--	--	--	--	--
Shumsky 1994 (19)	53 (16%)	13 (25%)	6 (11%)	0 (0%)	7 (13%)	--	--	--
Podczaski 1992 (20)	47 (16%)	24 (51%)	14 (5%)	1 (<1%)	9 (3%)	--	--	--
MacDonald 1990 (21)	19 (19%)	0 (0%)	--	--	--	--	--	--
Range	8% - 19%	0% - 54%	5%-33%	0%-4%	0%-14%	4%-13%	5%-21%	15%

Note: Ref, reference; CI, confidence interval; CT, computed tomography; NA, not applicable.

[a] One patient had an asymptomatic recurrence (peritoneal) detected during surgery (cholecystectomy).

[b] Agboola et al did not separate the results for asymptomatic and symptomatic recurrences.

Radiation Therapy

The fact that that women who receive radiation therapy have different patterns of recurrence than women who do not receive radiation therapy is widely recognized (3-5). Unfortunately, none of the studies included in this report specifically addressed the potentially different follow-up requirements of women who received radiation therapy compared to women who did not nor can it be certain that patients selected for radiation therapy were comparable to those who were not. The study by Podczaski et al (20) indicated that women who had received radiation therapy received yearly intravenous pyelograms for five years after treatment; however, they did not report differences in recurrences between women who had received radiation compared to those who did not. Owen et al (11) reported that women were followed up at either gynecology and radiation therapy clinics or gynecology clinics. They did not specify whether there were different procedures performed at the clinics. Shumsky et al published another paper in 1997 (28), based on the patients from their 1994 study, that retrospectively reviewed the charts of 435 women who had been treated for endometrial cancer (19). In their subsequent publication, Shumsky et al (28) retrospectively reviewed the same patients but split them into high and low risk of recurrence groups. Shumsky et al suggested that follow-up should be targeted towards women at a high risk of recurrence, because they are at high risk and also to monitor the effects of radiation therapy (assuming that the low-risk patients did not receive radiation therapy). However, Shumsky et al did not outline a possible follow-up regimen for women at high risk of recurrence.

Serum CA 125 Levels

In addition to the tests previously mentioned, four studies examined the role of serial tumour markers in the post-treatment surveillance of early-stage endometrial cancer (22-25).

Patsner et al (22) obtained serum CA 125 levels for 125 women with surgical stage I or II endometrial carcinoma before surgery and every three to four months during follow-up. Follow-up visits also included pelvic examinations and Pap smears. Median follow-up time was 18 months (range, 12 to 36 months). Among 123 patients with preoperative CA 125 levels <35 U/ml, 106 (86%) had normal CA 125 levels throughout follow-up and were recurrence free. A total of thirteen women had recurrences (11%)—six patients with normal CA 125 levels during follow-up had vaginal recurrences (five diagnosed because of vaginal bleeding and one by follow-up Pap smear) and seven with elevated CA 125 levels had recurrences at other sites (one pelvic, four abdominal and two pulmonary). Four patients without recurrent disease had elevated CA 125 levels associated with small bowel obstruction as a result of postoperative radiotherapy.

Rose et al (23) conducted a similar study but obtained preoperative CA 125 levels on only 45% of patients (n=236). Twenty-five percent of those with a preoperative CA 125 assessment had elevated levels (>35 U/ml) before surgery. Patients were classified as low risk (stage I, grade 1 or 2, and one-third or less myometrial invasion), medium risk (stage I, grade 1 or 2, and middle- or outer third or less myometrial invasion) or high risk (stage II, III, or IV, grade 3 or serous or clear cell carcinoma). CA 125 was measured as part of a surveillance program that also included pelvic examination, Pap smear, and chest x-ray every three to four months for the first two years, every six months for the next three years, and yearly thereafter. Median follow-up time was 39 months (range, four to 54 months). There were 29 recurrences among 236 patients treated by surgery (12%)—none of 97 in the low-risk group, two of 42 in the medium-risk group (5%), and 27 of 97 in the high-risk group (28%). Fifteen (55%) of the women with recurrent disease in the latter group had follow-up CA 125 levels >35 U/ml. The number of false negatives among the surgical group was not clear.

Among a series of 23 patients with stage I-IV endometrial cancer and elevated pre-treatment tumour markers (CA 125, CA 15.3 or CA 19.9), Lo et al (24) studied 14 women with stage I or II disease who had been treated by surgery plus postoperative radiotherapy. Three of the early-stage patients had elevated CA 125 levels during follow-up but none had recurrent disease. One patient with an elevated CA 19.9 level during follow-up was found to have a pulmonary recurrence. None of the patients with normal serum marker levels had recurrences.

Price et al (25) reviewed the serial CA 125 data from 11 women with uterine papillary serous carcinoma (six stage I, two stage II, and three stage III). All had CA 125 values <35 U/ml before surgery. Following the completion of adjuvant chemotherapy, CA 125 was measured every three months for a median follow-up time of 63 months (range, 21-90 months). One patient died of endometrial cancer six months after primary therapy but had normal CA 125 levels. The other 10 patients had no evidence of recurrent disease at their last follow-up visit, but four had elevated CA 125 levels (>35 U/ml) during follow-up.

Quality of Life

None of the identified studies evaluated patient preferences for follow-up or addressed the impact of follow-up programs on quality of life (10-25). Two of the studies identified (11,17) made reference to the potential psychological impact of follow-up appointments; however, the studies were not designed to measure the psychological impact of follow-up. The study by Berchuck et al (17) stated that it was difficult to assess "the value of psychological reassurance associated with a normal examination."

Systematic Reviews

Two systematic reviews were identified in the search of the literature (26,27). Both reviews located similar evidence used to inform the present evidence series.

Tjalma et al (26) reported a 13% overall recurrence rate with the probability of recurrence ranging from 7.7% to 18.9%. In their review, approximately 33% of recurrences were local, 57% were distant, and 10% were both local and distant. They reported that approximately 65% of recurrences were symptomatic, greater than 80% of recurrences were detected through clinical examination and symptomology, and greater than 80% of all recurrences occurred within the first three years of primary curative treatment. Tjalma et al (26) reported little value associated with cytology, CA 125, chest-X-ray, intravenous pyelogram, ultrasound, or CT in detecting recurrences in asymptomatic patients in order to improve overall survival. They concluded that a reasonable follow-up strategy for low-risk patients could entail a careful history and clinical examination every six months for three years and annually, starting in year four. The authors did not provide follow-up recommendations for patients at a high risk of recurrence. Cost-effectiveness information was also presented in the systematic review but is not a focus of the present evidence series.

The systematic review by Kew et al (27) reported rates of recurrence ranging from 8.5% to 19% of patients included in the nine retrospective studies identified in their search of the literature. They reported that the methodological quality and the heterogeneity of the studies made comparisons between studies difficult. They concluded that the studies did not show any survival benefit to routine follow-up but reported that small differences in survival might not have been detected given the small number of patients who recurred in the identified studies. The authors of the review did not provide conclusions on the optimum follow-up of patients.

DISCUSSION

The primary goal of a surveillance strategy in patients who have been treated for endometrial cancer is to facilitate the early detection of recurrent disease. This detection results in the introduction of salvage treatment, with the overall aim to improve survival or decrease morbidity secondary to the recurrence. A review of the 16 retrospective studies in this series suggests that there is no evidence to support that intensive follow-up schedules with multiple routine diagnostic interventions result in survival benefits any more or less than non-intensive follow-up schedules without multiple routine diagnostic interventions.

From the 12 studies that reported results for specific follow-up schedules that ranged from a low of eight visits to a high of 32 visits over five years, no discernable differences in outcome were detected between any of the follow-up programs.

When considering the use of routine examinations or diagnostic interventions in asymptomatic patients, the reporting of outcomes was inconsistent; however, only physical

examination showed some utility in detecting recurrence. This adds some support to the idea that a physical examination that includes a pelvic rectal examination is useful as part of a routine follow-up strategy. In seven studies, physical examination showed the greatest efficacy, with recurrence detection rates ranging from 5% and 33%, while Pap tests detected the least amount of asymptomatic recurrences (≤ 4%). Chest X-ray detected from 0% to 14% of asymptomatic recurrences, but the detection of clinical asymptomatic recurrences in the chest and the impact of that detection on survival have not been clearly elucidated. In four non-comparative studies with limited data (24-27), elevated CA 125 serum levels did not consistently indicate disease recurrence, and in two studies, a high rate of false positives were reported (21% and 40%). Intensive surveillance with CT scans and ultrasounds directed at detecting asymptomatic abdominal extra-pelvic recurrences showed limited benefit when employed on a routine basis.

There was no evidence to inform the role of follow-up by clinical setting or type of specialist on patient outcomes. In spite of this, many patients may continue to be seen by specialists in a cancer centre when there is no evidence to support or refute that outcomes would vary if followed by a qualified general practitioner in the office setting. The key issue is not so much location but that practitioners be skilled in the in the performance of a pelvic rectal examination and assessment grounded in an understanding of the natural history of the disease. Because of the resource implications involved, this issue lends itself ideally to a prospective evaluation of the most efficient location for follow-up. In the breast cancer setting, for instance, a randomized trial detected no significant differences in outcomes for patients followed by family physician versus specialist care (29).

Even though the evidence from the retrospective studies is modest, there are some compelling points to consider in determining the most appropriate follow-up of patients. One is the relatively low risk of patient recurrence. The overall recurrence rate across all of the studies was 13%, and for patients at a low risk of recurrence, rates ranged from 1% to 3%. This means that the majority of patients who were followed did not experience a recurrence, regardless of follow-up; this was especially the case for patients at a low risk of recurrence. It seems reasonable therefore, that patients at a lower risk of recurrence be followed differently than those at a higher risk of recurrence.

Another point relates to the known natural history of disease recurrence for these patients. The data indicated that about two thirds to three quarters of all recurrences were detected through symptoms alone. For these patients, recurrence detection would have occurred regardless of follow-up strategy. In addition, if a patient does experience a recurrence, the data indicate that approximately 60% of the time the recurrence will be distant. The prognosis for patients with a distant recurrence is generally not favourable, regardless of timing of disease detection. For these patients, it is unlikely that early detection through follow-up would result in any survival benefits.

The final point to consider is that most patients had a recurrence at about three years or less after primary potentially curative treatment. At about three years, 70% to 100% of recurrences had occurred in 11 of the 12 studies that reported that data. For the majority of patients, follow-up in years four, five, or beyond, detected very few recurrences, and would seem to be of questionable benefit.

Taken together, it appears that the follow-up programs identified in this series were not particularly effective in improving patient outcomes related to survival, especially after a three-to five-year period. To illustrate, according to the data identified in this systematic review, if 1,000 patients who were at a low risk of recurrence were to be followed, approximately 3% or 30 patients would experience a recurrence, most within three years of primary treatment with curative intent. Of these thirty patients, approximately 20 or more would present with symptomatic disease outside of regular follow-up. This leaves approximately 10 or less asymptomatic patients (≤ 1%) for whom the detection of recurrence through follow-up may be beneficial. Of these ten or so patients, approximately six patients would experience a distant recurrence, for which the early detection of recurrence has shown no overall survival benefit. That leaves approximately four out of 1,000 low-risk patients who could potentially benefit from a follow-up program. Of the four asymptomatic patients with a local recurrence, approximately two patients would not be salvageable, thus leaving

approximately two patients who would ultimately benefit in an absolute way (i.e., survival) from a follow-up program as compared, in theory, with no follow-up program at all. For patients at a higher risk of recurrence, assuming a 13% recurrence rate, the number who would benefit from follow-up increases to approximately seven patients.

While the data indicate that the small number of patients who would benefit from a surveillance strategy does not seem to reasonably justify the routine follow-up of all patients, there are good arguments to support the use of follow-up programs. The strongest argument is that the data used to inform the issue is from retrospective studies, and the actual rates and types of recurrence may vary considerably. Until definitive results from randomized controlled trials or large prospective studies become available, it seems prudent that patients be followed according to some type of schedule. Patients may also derive a psychological benefit from some type of follow-up program, but there is insufficient evidence to support or refute that speculation. Finally, standard practice is such that most patients are followed according to some type of follow-up strategy after potentially curative primary therapy, and this practice reflects a more conservative approach. While it is not being suggested that standard practice be discontinued, resource utility is a practical consideration that should not be overlooked when determining the most appropriate follow-up schedule. The follow-up schedules of the identified studies were generally consistent with five year follow-up ranging from eight to 15 visits. It would seem to be reasonable, therefore, that a follow-up program fall within that range of visits but also account for risk of recurrence and the natural history of the disease. Other factors that may impact upon this are patient preferences and resource availability.

ONGOING TRIALS

No ongoing trials were identified in the search of the literature.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the interpretation of the evidence from retrospective studies and expert consensus opinion, the Gynecology Cancer DSG concluded that the most appropriate follow-up strategy was likely one based upon the risk of recurrence, the natural history of the disease, and individual patient preferences. Specifically, for patients at low risk of recurrence, a reasonable follow-up schedule could include a general examination that includes a complete history and a pelvic-rectal examination, conducted on a semi-annual to annual basis; a targeted investigation if symptomatic; and counselling about the symptoms of recurrence of endometrial cancer. Counselling is extremely important because, in the retrospective studies reviewed, 41% to 100% of patients with recurrences were symptomatic. The choice of follow-up interval should be decided in large part by patient preference. There is no evidence to suggest that closer follow-up leads to improved detection of recurrence, but patients may derive a psychological benefit with more follow-up as opposed to less follow-up.

For patients at a high risk of recurrence, a reasonable follow-up schedule could include a general examination, which includes a complete history, a pelvic-rectal examination every three to six months for the first three years and semi-annually for the next two years, a targeted investigation if symptomatic, counselling about the signs and symptoms of recurrence, and counselling on the potential adverse effects of radiotherapy. Overall, there is insufficient evidence to inform the routine use of Pap smears, chest x-rays, abdominal ultrasounds, CT scans, or CA 125 levels alone to detect asymptomatic recurrences with the aim of improving survival.

Patients should be followed by a health care professional who is knowledgeable about the natural history of the disease and who is comfortable performing speculum and pelvic exams in order to diagnose or detect a local (vaginal) recurrence, as this type of recurrence is potentially curable. Since most patients tend to recur within a three-year time frame, if a patient is initially followed by specialist, it is reasonable to suggest that patients be followed by a qualified general practitioner after three to five years of recurrence-free follow-up. Formal follow-up to detect recurrences beyond five years is generally not indicated because the majority of recurrences are

symptomatic and virtually all recurrences occur before that time. Thus, it appears reasonable to suggest that annual population-based general physical and pelvic examination be conducted for all patients after five years of routine follow-up.

The available retrospective evidence highlights the need for well-conducted studies, preferably randomized controlled trials, to help inform decision making on the most appropriate follow-up for patients. Ideally, after potentially curative primary therapy, a multicentre study would categorize patients as being at a low, intermediate, or high risk of recurrence (with surgical or pathological confirmation) and would randomize patients who were clinically disease free to either a less intensive follow-up schedule with or without multiple diagnostic interventions in asymptomatic patients or a more intensive follow-up schedule with or without multiple diagnostic interventions in asymptomatic patients. All patients would receive counselling on the symptoms of potential recurrence. The study could compare differences in recurrence by type of clinical setting where follow-up is performed and by type of specialist involved in the follow-up. Careful detailing of the type of recurrence, whether symptomatic or asymptomatic, whether distant or local, quality of life, patient preferences, and subsequent survival outcomes would greatly inform the most appropriate follow-up strategy for this patient population.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Members of the Gynecology Cancer DSG declared that there were no conflicts of interest.

JOURNAL REFERENCES

None at this time.

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For a complete list of the Gynecology Cancer Disease Site Group members, please visit the CCO Web site at http://www.cancercare.on.ca/

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Contact Information

For further information about this series, please contact **Dr. Michael Fung-Kee-Fung**, Chair, Gynecology Cancer Disease Site Group; Ottawa General Hospital,
501 Smyth Road, Ottawa, Ontario; Telephone: 613-737-8560, FAX: 613-737-8828

For information about the PEBC and the most current version of all reports,
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or contact the PEBC office at:
Phone: 905-527-4322 ext. 42822 Fax: 905-526-6775 E-mail: ccopgi@mcmaster.ca

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Evidence-Based Series 4-9 Version 2: Section 3

Follow-up after Primary Therapy for Endometrial Cancer: Guideline Development and External Review—Methods and Results

M. Fung-Kee-Fung, J. Dodge, L. Elit, H. Lukka, A. Chambers, T. Oliver, and the Gynecology Cancer Disease Site Group

A Quality Initiative of the
Program in Evidence-Based Care, Cancer Care Ontario.
Developed by the Provincial Gynecology Cancer Disease Site Group

These guideline recommendations have been ENDORSED, which means that the recommendations are still current and relevant for decision making. Please see Section 4:Document Review Summary and Tool for a summary of updated evidence published between 2005 and 2016, and for details on how this Clinical Practice Guideline was ENDORSED

Report Date: January 10, 2006

THE PROGRAM IN EVIDENCE-BASED CARE

The Program in Evidence-based Care (PEBC) is an initiative of the Ontario provincial cancer system, Cancer Care Ontario (CCO) (1). The PEBC mandate is to improve the lives of Ontarians affected by cancer, through the development, dissemination, implementation, and evaluation of evidence-based products designed to facilitate clinical, planning, and policy decisions about cancer care.

The PEBC supports a network of disease-specific panels, called Disease Site Groups (DSGs) and Guideline Development Groups (GDGs), mandated to develop the PEBC products. These panels are comprised of clinicians, methodologists, and community representatives from across the province.

The PEBC is well known for producing evidence-based practice guideline reports, using the methods of the Practice Guidelines Development Cycle (1,2). The PEBC reports consist of a comprehensive systematic review of the clinical evidence on a specific cancer care topic, an interpretation of and consensus agreement on that evidence by our DSGs and GDGs, the resulting clinical recommendations, and an external review by Ontario clinicians in the province for whom the topic is relevant. The PEBC has a formal standardized process to ensure the currency of each clinical practice guideline report, through the routine periodic review and evaluation of the scientific literature and, where appropriate, the integration of that literature with the original clinical practice guideline information.

The Evidence-based Series: A New Look to the PEBC Practice Guidelines

Each Evidence-based Series is comprised of three sections.

- *Section 1: Clinical Practice Guideline*. This section contains the clinical recommendations derived from a systematic review of the clinical and scientific literature and its interpretation by the DSG or GDG involved and a formalized external review by Ontario practitioners.
- *Section 2: Systematic Review.* This section presents the comprehensive systematic review of the clinical and scientific research on the topic and the conclusions reached by the DSG or GDG.
- *Section 3: Guideline Development and External Review: Methods and Results.* This section summarizes the guideline development process and the results of the formal external review by Ontario practitioners of the draft version of the clinical practice guideline and systematic review.

DEVELOPMENT OF THIS EVIDENCE-BASED SERIES

Developing the Draft Systematic Review and Clinical Practice Guideline

This evidence-based series was developed by the Gynecology Cancer DSG of Cancer Care Ontario's PEBC. The series is a convenient and up-to-date source of the best available evidence developed through systematic review, evidence synthesis, and input from practitioners in Ontario. The systematic review on follow-up after primary therapy for endometrial cancer is reported in Section 2. On the basis of that evidence and the interpretation by members of the DSG, draft recommendations were circulated to Ontario practitioners on June 25, 2004 for feedback (Table 1).

Table 1. Draft recommendations circulated for external review.

Target Population

The target population for screening for disease recurrence includes two groups of women without evidence of metastatic disease after primary, curative treatment for endometrial cancer (all stages of disease):

1. **Those who underwent a total abdominal hysterectomy and bilateral salpingo-oophorectomy with or without pelvic lymphadenectomy as primary therapy (i.e., low-risk)**
2. **Those who underwent a total abdominal hysterectomy and bilateral salpingo-oophorectomy with or without pelvic lymphadenectomy as primary therapy, with subsequent adjuvant radiotherapy (i.e., high risk)**

Draft Recommendations

The lack of sufficient, high quality evidence precludes definitive recommendations from being made. Instead, the Gynecology Cancer Disease Site Group offers the following opinions based on the evidence reviewed:

- **There is insufficient evidence to indicate that an intensive surveillance program for women who have been treated for endometrial cancer results in a survival benefit.**
- **There is no direct evidence that supports the clinical benefit of using routine Pap smears and chest X-rays to detect asymptomatic recurrences in women who have been treated for endometrial cancer.**
- **There is insufficient evidence to make recommendations regarding intervals for surveillance. However, based on the Gynecology Cancer Disease Site Group's interpretation of the existing evidence, management options that clinicians and patients should consider include:**
  - **<u>For women at low-risk</u> (i.e., stage IA, grade 1 or 2 or stage IB, grade 1 or 2):**
    - **An annual well-woman assessment, including a pelvic-rectal examination.**
    - **Counselling about the symptoms of recurrence of endometrial cancer, because more than 50% of recurrences are symptomatic.**
  - **<u>For women at high risk</u> (i.e., stage IA, grade 3, stage IB, grade 3, stage IC, advanced stage):**
    - **A general examination, pelvic-rectal examination, and targeted investigation based on symptoms every three to six months within the first three years.**
    - **Counselling about the symptoms of recurrence of endometrial cancer, because more than 50% of recurrences are symptomatic.**
    - **Counselling about the symptoms suggestive of long-term toxicity associated with radiation therapy.**

- **Women with a suspected recurrence should be referred promptly to a cancer centre for further assessment.**

It is the opinion of the Gynecology Cancer Disease Site Group that women who have been treated for endometrial cancer should be followed by a health care professional who is comfortable performing speculum and pelvic exams, in order to diagnose or detect a local (vaginal) recurrence. This type of recurrence is potentially curable.

Practitioner Feedback

Based on the evidence and the draft recommendations presented above, feedback was sought from Ontario clinicians

Methods

Practitioner feedback was obtained through a mailed survey of 172 practitioners in Ontario (101 family practitioners, 40 medical oncologists, 16 surgeons, 14 gynecologists, and one urologist). The survey consisted of items evaluating the methods, results, and interpretive summary. Written comments were invited. Follow-up reminders were sent at two weeks (post card) and four weeks (complete package mailed again). The Gynecology DSG reviewed the results of the survey.

Results

One hundred and twenty six responses were received out of the 172 surveys sent (73.3% response rate). Responses include returned completed surveys as well as phone, fax, and email responses. Of the practitioners who responded, 27 indicated that the report was relevant to their clinical practice and completed the survey (15 family practitioners, five medical oncologists, three surgeons, three gynecologists, and one urologist). Results of the practitioner feedback survey are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Results of the practitioner feedback survey.

Item	Number (%)		
	Strongly agree or agree	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Strongly disagree or disagree**
The rationale for developing an evidence summary, as stated in the "Introduction" of the report, is clear.	23 (85.2%)	4 (14.8%)	-
There is a need for an evidence summary on this topic.	21 (77.8%)	5 (18.5%)	1 (3.7%)
The literature search is relevant and complete in this evidence summary.	17 (63.0%)	10 (37.0)	-
I agree with the methodology used to summarize the evidence.	25 (92.6%)	2 (7.4%)	-
I agree with the overall interpretation of the evidence in the evidence summary.	24 (88.9%)	2 (7.4%)	1 (3.7%)
The "Opinions of the Disease Site Group" section of this evidence summary is useful.	24 (88.9%)	3 (11.1%)	-
An evidence summary of this type will be useful for clinical decision making.	22 (81.5%)	4 (14.8%)	1 (3.7%)
At present, there is insufficient evidence to develop a practice guideline on this topic.	14 (53.9%)	5 (19.2%)	7 (26.9%)
There is a need to develop an evidence-based practice guideline on this topic when sufficient evidence becomes available.	22 (81.5%)	3 (11.1%)	2 (7.4%)

Summary of Written Comments

Six (22.2%) respondents (three family practitioners, two medical oncologists, and one surgeon) provided written comments. One practitioner commented that the targeted investigation of symptoms should be applicable for women at both high and low risk, while another practitioner commented that further information regarding the symptoms of recurrence of endometrial cancer and the toxicity associated with radiotherapy would be helpful information in counselling patients. The remaining practitioners provided general comments not requiring revisions to the draft series.

Modifications/Actions

In response to the written comments, the Gynecology Cancer DSG made the following changes to the guideline:

- The recommendation for women at low risk was revised to include a targeted investigation for patients who were symptomatic.
- A statement regarding symptoms of recurrence was added to the introduction, and examples of symptoms associated with radiotherapy were added to the third recommendation.

Report Approval Panel

The evidence series was circulated to the two members of the Report Approval Panel and the Guidelines Coordinator of the PEBC. Feedback was provided by the Panel and the Coordinator and is summarized below. Feedback was reviewed by the Gynecology Cancer DSG, and modifications were made to the series in response. The revised draft was then recirculated to the Panel for final approval.

Summary of Written Comments with Modifications Made by the Gynecology Cancer DSG

- In the past, the PEBC has suggested that recommendations based primarily on expert opinion be presented as 'Opinions' rather than 'Recommendations'. However, it may be more helpful to present any proposed action or conclusion as a recommendation while clearly indicating the type of supporting evidence (based on expert consensus, randomized trials, etc.).
  Response: The draft was revised to reflect that recommendations, not opinions, were being presented on the basis of modest evidence from retrospective studies and through expert consensus opinion.
- The panel questioned whether the interval between follow-up visits should remain constant or was it reasonable to lengthen intervals over time.
  Response: The recommendations regarding interval of follow-up were revised on the basis that most patients who recur do so within three years of primary curative treatment and very few recurrences are detected past five years.
- The panel questioned if there was a time where follow-up was no longer needed.
  Response: A recommendation was added to reflect that follow-up to detect recurrences beyond five years is generally not indicated because the majority of recurrences are symptomatic and virtually all recurrences occur before that time.
  Regarding who performs follow-up, a sub-bullet was added to the recommendations saying that, if a patient is initially followed by a specialist, they may be followed by a qualified general practitioner after three to five years of recurrence-free follow-up.
- The panel requested a more explicit recommendation on the use of diagnostic tests in asymptomatic patients.
  Response: The recommendation on the use of diagnostic tests in asymptomatic patients was revised to state that there was insufficient evidence to inform (either for or against) their routine use to detect asymptomatic recurrences.
- The panel requested an indication of the specific symptoms associated with recurrence.
  Response: The specific symptoms associated with recurrence were added as a sub-bullet in the recommendations.
- The difference between a well-woman assessment and a clinical examination, both including pelvic-rectal examinations, was not explicitly reported.
  Response: The recommendations were revised to read that all patients receive a clinical examination, including a complete history and pelvic-rectal examination, regardless of the risk of recurrence.
- The key evidence indicates that no significant differences in survival were detected between asymptomatic and symptomatic patients; however, Table 4 reports a significant difference in the study reported by Gordon et al.
  Response: While one study did report a significant survival advantage for patients with asymptomatic recurrences, that advantage was based on only 17 patients who recurred in a retrospective study not designed to detect survival advantages. The trial was removed from the Key Evidence section and a discussion of the survival advantage was added to the section on Survival. As a side note, Table 4 was removed because there was considerable overlap between the text and the table as well as overlap between Tables 3 and 4.

- The recurrence rates for low- and high-risk patients reported in the key evidence differ from those reported in Table 3.
  Response: The reporting of recurrence rates was modified to be consistent in the Key Evidence and Table 3, and was also addressed in the Discussion section.
- The panel suggested that since the Series is understandably and appropriately heavily influenced by 'expert opinion', a description of the DSG consensus process would be helpful.
  Response: While much of the historical information around the DSG consensus process was not documented, the draft was modified to include a more comprehensive Discussion and Conclusions section.
- While very commonly used, some would find use of the term 'salvage therapy' to describe 'second-line therapy' as inappropriate and potentially offensive to patients. Suggest restating.
  Response: Because the term `salvage' is the common phraseology for the treatment of patients who recur, to avoid confusion, it was felt that the use of the term was appropriate.
- The Panel commented that the formula used for pooling the detection recurrence rates is no longer considered appropriate. If the pooled data is considered key to the document, a formula that weights the data from each study according to the inverse of the study variance would be appropriate. Otherwise, the pooled data could be deleted from the document.
  Response: The data were re-analyzed using the appropriate formula, which was explicitly noted in the Synthesizing the Evidence section.

Peer Review

The systematic review was submitted to the *Journal of Gynecologic Oncology* in November 2005. In December 2005, feedback requiring substantive revisions was provided by the journal. Feedback was reviewed by the Gynecology Cancer DSG, and modifications were made to the series in response. A revised manuscript was then re-submitted to the journal for consideration in January 2006.

Reviewer 1: This work is a nice synthesis of the heterogeneous data available regarding follow-up for endometrial cancer after primary therapy. The authors have given appropriate weight and emphasis to the limitations of their analysis. With wide variation in management philosophies for this malignancy, it is a daunting task to make sense of follow-up strategies and outcomes. I congratulate the authors on a job well done.

- In the abstract, the 3rd sentence in the "Results" section has a semicolon. If punctuation is desired there, a comma would be more appropriate.
  Response: The semicolon was removed from the manuscript
- Appendix 1 is not necessary for the target audience of this manuscript.
  Response: Appendix 1 was removed from the manuscript
- With the authors' experience and interest in evidence-based management, I think the paper could be strengthened by a brief discussion of how they would design a study to look at the value of (both medically and psychologically) and best approach to follow-up for these women. This is purely optional as it was not a goal of this paper to design such a study; however, a few comments about how we can use the data culled and interpreted by the authors here as a foundation to build an evidence-based approach for follow-up care would be of interest to a large portion of the readership of the journal and may spark interest in doing such a study.
  Response: A statement was added to the Conclusions regarding the authors' views of a randomized trial that would inform the most appropriate follow-up strategy for this patient population.

Reviewer 2: The authors performed an extensive literature review and identified 16 retrospective studies that provide information about the follow-up of women treated for endometrial cancer.

This represents an important undertaking as significant resources are expended during the surveillance of treated women without careful analysis of existing data.

- It is unfortunate that all available sources consisted of retrospective analyses—and, therefore, have inherent limitations.
  Response: None
- The most useful portion of the manuscript was the collating of data into tables 3, 4, 6, and 7. Table 1 and Appendix 1 are unnecessary. Table 2 has limited value, and Table 5 could be condensed and incorporated into Table 6.
  Response: Table 1 and Appendix 1 were removed, Tables 2 and 5 were felt to be important to fully inform readers but were revised to improve clarity and relevance.
- Given the assumptions listed in the introduction regarding the value of surveillance—interventions are cost effective, natural history is known, and salvage therapy is available--I was disappointed that the discussion section did not systematically address these issues. If the data do not support these assumptions, then the authors should argue that no surveillance is indicated. In the end, we are left with a large compilation of data that leads to no conclusion or recommendation. What was the point? What do the authors do?
  Response: The manuscript was revised to exclude cost effectiveness as a consideration as it is not a focus of the series, and the conclusions were rewritten to address the optimum follow-up schedule based on the available evidence.
- Several of the series reviewed derived recommended modifications to their pre-existing empiric surveillance protocols based upon the analysis of recurrence data. The current manuscript does not describe these modifications or assess the legitimacy of the modifications. However, the manuscript proposes the same surveillance schema in its "conclusions."
  Response: The manuscript deviates from the identified studies in that patients were not followed according to risk of recurrence in the studies but are in the present series. The evidence was not deemed strong enough to deviate any further from the follow-up programs listed in the majority of the studies. This point was expanded upon in the revised discussion section.
- If reference 28 is a letter to the editor, don't list it. Similarly, if reference 29 is a limited description of 21 cases, take it of the list.
  Response: The references were removed from the manuscript.
- The authors did a very nice job of consolidating data from multiple disparate sources into their tables. I found it difficult to follow the text which provided a sentence by sentence rehash of the tabular data. The discussion would be stronger if it focused on a summary analysis of the tables, rather than a study by study synopsis.
  Response: The discussion was revised to focus on the results of the evidence identified and to highlight the interpretation of that evidence in informing the most appropriate follow-up of this patient population.
- The analysis of the validity of routine testing was particularly weak [see pg.16].
  Response: The discussion was revised to expand upon the analysis of the validity of routine testing.

Reviewer 3: The paper is giving a systematic review of studies of follow-up protocols after primary therapy for endometrial cancer. The presentation is interesting, timely and the abstract, introduction and discussion well written and balanced. The result part and number of tables are relevant but should be substantially shortened to pinpoint the main findings. These main findings should be presented in a total of two tables, and further tables could be as supplementary data on the web, in order to shorten the manuscript.

Response: Table 1 and Appendix 1 were removed, Tables 2 and 5 were felt to be important to fully inform readers, but were revised to improve clarity and relevance, and the manuscript was edited for greater brevity where possible.

- The author state that: Surgical pathologic factors that predict survival and disease recurrence include tumour grade, histology, depth of myometrial invasion, presence of lymph node metastasis, and the presence of extrauterine disease, factors that are all incorporated into the Fédération Internationale de Gynécologie Obstétrique (FIGO) staging system. FIGO 1988 surgical stag is not influenced by tumour grade and subtype, as the author also state in the appendix. The text should be modified to reflect this.
  Response: The reference to the FIGO 1988 staging system was removed from the text.
- The authors state that: Although endometrial cancer has a relatively low case fatality ratio of 0.19 (in patients with stage I or II disease), one can expect a 5% to 20% recurrence rate among high-risk patients. The reported recurrence rate among high-risk patients seem low. Do the authors mean high-risk patients among Stage I/II patients, many of which would be classified as low-risk patients. Please clarify.
  Response: The 5% to 20% recurrence rate did refer to high risk stage I or II patients. That information was included in the text.
- Table 1: Should be improved and changed to reflect that: FIGO stage IIA is treated as FIGO stage I, and is not necessarily high risk. Serous papilllary/clear cell carcinomas are always high risk. The risk of a grade 2 tumour stage IC depends on whether proper lymph node staging has been performed. Many of the categories can be grouped together to improve the reading of the table.
  Response: Table 1 was removed from the manuscript. Patients were considered at a higher risk of recurrence if they had disease other than stage IA or IB, grade 1 or 2.

The Gynecology Cancer DSG believes that the current iteration of the evidence series satisfies the criterion for internal PEBC approval and is appropriate for publication in a peer-reviewed journal.

All evidence-based series approved by the Report Approval Panel are posted on the CCO Web site (www.cancercare.on.ca), and most are submitted for publication to a peer-reviewed journal.

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Contact Information

For further information about this series, please contact **Dr. Michael Fung Kee Fung**, Chair, Gynecology Cancer Disease Site Group; Ottawa General Hospital,
501 Smyth Road, Ottawa, Ontario; Telephone: 613-737-8560, FAX: 613-737-8828

For information about the PEBC and the most current version of all reports,
please visit the CCO website at http://www.cancercare.on.ca/
or contact the PEBC office at:
Phone: 905-527-4322 ext. 42822 Fax: 905-526-6775 E-mail: ccopgi@mcmaster.ca

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Evidence-based Series 4-9 Version 2: Section 4

A Quality Initiative of the
Program in Evidence-based Care (PEBC), Cancer Care Ontario (CCO)
Developed by the Gynecology Cancer Disease Site Group

Follow-up after Primary Therapy for Endometrial Cancer

Guideline Summary Review

L. Elit, N. Coakley and the Gynecology Cancer Disease Site Group

Review Date: June 12, 2017

The 2006 guideline recommendations are

ENDORSED

This means that the recommendations are still current and relevant for decision making

OVERVIEW

The original version of this guidance document was released by Cancer Care Ontario's Program in Evidence-based Care in 2006.

In November 2014, this document was assessed in accordance with the PEBC Document Assessment and Review Protocol and was determined to require a review. As part of the review, a PEBC methodologist conducted an updated search of the literature. A clinical expert (LE) reviewed and interpreted the new eligible evidence and proposed the existing recommendations could be endorsed. The Gynecology Disease Site Group (DSG) endorsed the recommendations found in Section 1 (Clinical Practice Guideline) in June 2017.

DOCUMENT ASSESSMENT AND REVIEW RESULTS

Question Considered

What is the most appropriate strategy for the follow-up of patients with endometrial cancer who are clinically disease free after receiving potentially curative primary treatment? Specifically, do differences in follow-up intervals, diagnostic interventions, clinical setting, or specialty influence patient outcomes related to local or distant recurrence, survival, or quality of life?

Literature Search and New Evidence
Embase, Medline, Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews November 2005 to November 25, 2016 were searched. 3060 articles were found, 37 were retained for full text review and 19 retained for this review. Brief results of these searches are shown in the Document Review Tool.

Impact on the Guideline and its Recommendations
The new data supports existing recommendations. Hence, the Gynecology DSG ENDORSED the 2006 recommendations on follow-up after primary therapy for endometrial cancer.

Number and Title of Document under Review	4-9 Follow-up after Primary Therapy for Endometrial Cancer
Current Report Date	Jan 10, 2006
Clinical Expert	Dr. Laurie Elit
Research Coordinator	Nadia Coakley
Date Assessed	December 2, 2014
Approval Date and Review Outcome (once completed)	June 12, 2017 (ENDORSED)

Original Question(s):
What is the most appropriate strategy for the follow-up of patients with endometrial cancer who are clinically disease free after receiving potentially curative primary treatment? Specifically, do differences in follow-up intervals, diagnostic interventions, clinical setting, or specialty influence patient outcomes related to local or distant recurrence, survival, or quality of life?

Target Population:
Women without evidence of disease after primary potentially curative treatment for any stage of endometrial cancer comprise the target population. Of particular interest are out comes from follow-up strategies reported for patients at a lower risk of recurrence (i.e., stage IA or IB, grade 1 or 2) and those at a higher risk of recurrence (i.e., stage IA or IB, grade 3, or stage IC or advanced stage).

Study Section Criteria:
Articles were selected for inclusion in the evidence series if they reported data on follow-up strategies for patients who had received curative treatment for endometrial cancer and who were clinically disease-free at study point. Specifically, studies were to describe the follow-up program, define the entry criteria for the study population, and report outcome data on survival, the number of recurrences found during screening, or on patient preferences.
Case reports, letters, editorials, and papers published in a language other than English were not considered for inclusion in the systematic review of the evidence.
In the absence of randomized controlled trials, in order of preference, comparative cohort studies, prospective single-cohort studies, and retrospective single-cohort studies were deemed eligible for inclusion. Practice guidelines, meta-analyses, or systematic reviews

explicitly based on evidence related to the guideline question were also eligible for inclusion in the systematic review Search Details: Embase, Medline, Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2005 to November 25, 2016. 3060 articles were found, 37 retained for full text review and 19 retained for this review. Summary of new evidence: Please see table below:	
Please respond YES or NO to all the questions below. Provide enough explanation to adequately answer the question.	
1. Does any of the newly identified evidence contradict the current recommendations? (i.e., the current recommendations may cause harm or lead to unnecessary or improper treatment if followed)	No
2. Does the newly identified evidence support the existing recommendations?	Yes
3. Do the current recommendations cover all relevant subjects addressed by the evidence? (i.e., no new recommendations are necessary)	Yes
4. Is there a good reason to postpone updating the guideline? (e.g., new stronger evidence will be published soon, changes to current recommendations are trivial or address very limited situations)	The recommendations from 2006 are still current however, the results of two studies (TOTEM and ENSURE) will be available for the next time this guideline comes up for review.
Review Outcome as recommended by the Clinical Expert	**ENDORSE**
DSG/GDG Commentary	None

Please see tables below:

Table 1: Evidence

Reference	Study type	# of pts	Patients with recurrent disease #(%)					Median follow up months (range)	Median time to recurrence months (range)	Recurrences diagnosed after surgery (years)	
			number of patients with recurrence	Symptomatic	Asymptomatic	Local	Distant			% recurrences	Years from surgery
Aung, L.[2] 2014 Stage 1 and 2	Retrospective analysis of follow-up data	552	81	73	8	NR	20	49.5 (2.3-140.2)	18.5 (1.3-106.7) months from diagnosis	NR	45/81 (56%) 2 years after surgery
Beaver, K.[4] 2016 Stage 1	RCT non inferiority trial comparing telephone and hospital follow-up	259	10	10	NR	NR	7	NR	307 days (48-662) after randomization	NR	NR
Budithi S.[5] 2014 (abstract) Endometrial data only	Retrospective review	224	16%	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	20.23 months for clinically detected 32.15 months for patient detected p=0.03	NR	NR
Lee, J.[9] 2015 (abstract)	Retrospective chart review	389	14 (3.6%)	4	10	NR	NR	61	NR	NR	NR
O'Donnell, R.[13] 2011 (abstract)	Retrospective chart review of Stage 1a pts	53	0	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR

Table 2: Guidelines, systematic reviews and other studies

References		Recommendations
Guidelines		
ESMO Bakerlandt, M.M.[3] 2009 Guideline		Most recurrences will occur within the first 3 years after treatment, and 3- to 4-montly evaluations with history, physical and gynecological examination are usually recommended. Follow-up intervals of 6 months are recommended during the fourth and fifth years, and annually thereafter. No impact on survival of a routine follow-up strategy has been demonstrated. However, since a significant number of relapses occur isolated in the vagina or pelvis, early detection and possibly curative treatment of these should be the main focus

References		Recommendations
		of follow-up. Routine technical examinations such as PAP smears or imaging studies are of unproven benefit.
ESMO-ESGO-ESTRO concensus conference[6] 2016 Guideline	Consensus conference	Doesn't specifically state anything for follow-up but that it should be read together with the ESMO guideline
Emmons G.[7] acting for Uterus commission of AGO (from Germany) 2013 Guideline	Update to 2008 guideline	1. As early detection of local recurrence is necessary for curative resection, patients should be followed up every 3 months in the first 2–3 years after primary therapy by speculum examination, vaginal and rectal examination, and ultrasound, where required. 2. Additional imaging for diagnostic purposes is only necessary for symptomatic patients. 3. Follow-up consultations should address the topics listed below: " transient and long-term impact of disease and therapy " psycho-oncological/psychotherapeutic treatment options " sexuality and relationships " quality of life
SEOM Guidelines Oaknin, A.[14] 2012 Same as ESMO 2010[15]	All stages	Patients with EC should be followed up both for relapse and late toxicity. Although there is a lack of evidence of clear benefit and follow-up schedules, the following could be advised. For the first 3 years patients can be seen every 3–4 months. History, physical and vaginal examination should be performed. Further investigations (CT, MRI, blood tests, examination under anaesthesia) can be requested if clinically indicated. For the next 2 years and until the completion of 5 years in total, 6-monthly appointments are recommended. During this surveillance the increased risk of cancers of the breast, ovary and colon in patients with EC should be taken into account.
NCCN Guideline[1] 2017	Uterine Neoplasms	For most patients, disease recurs within 3 years of initial treatment. Because most recurrences are symptomatic, all patients should receive verbal and written information regarding the symptoms of recurrent disease. Given the lack of prospective studies regarding the optimal frequency of post-treatment follow-up, the NCCN Panel believes that the algorithm represents a reasonable surveillance scheme. The use of vaginal cytology is no longer recommended for asymptomatic patients consistent with the SGO guidelines. Patients with stage I endometrial cancer have a low risk of asymptomatic vaginal recurrence (2.6%), especially after adjuvant brachytherapy, and vaginal cytology is not independently useful for detecting recurrences in this group of patients. A recent multi-institutional review examined the utility of various surveillance methods in 254 patients with high-grade disease, revealing that symptoms led to the detection of the most recurrences (56%), followed by physical exam (18%), surveillance CT (15%), CA-125 (10%), and vaginal cytology (1%)
Systematic reviews		
Lajer, H.[8] 2010 Systematic review	Only 3 of 14 papers are in our time frame for this	The articles mentioned mainly measured the effects of follow-up care through survival using 2 methods. One method compared women for whom relapse was detected through normal

References		Recommendations
	review, the rest are older.	follow-up care with women who discovered symptoms of relapse and consulted a physician. The other method compared women with symptoms when relapse was diagnosed versus those without. Only 3 of 14 studies have reported a positive effect on survival. These studies compared patients with and those without symptoms but did not correct for known bias, including the fact that symptoms are not registered systematically. The largest of the 3 studies found improved survival among patients with symptoms with a low risk of relapse versus similar patients without symptoms (P = 0.05). No benefit could be demonstrated for highrisk patients. The data were based on 280 of 438 patients with relapse; 158 patients were excluded, including 143 solely because they did not receive follow-up care, which is an important bias. The other studies found no improvement in survival for follow-up care when compared with women discovering symptoms of relapse and consulting a physician. One study found no effect on survival despite intensive follow-up care with frequent use of x-rays, ultrasound imaging, and computed tomography (CT). The numbers of relapses were, however, small in all these studies, and accordingly a slight improvement in survival cannot be excluded. Several studies have calculated the numbers of follow-up consultations required to find one relapse case free of symptoms: 653, 206, and 606.
Mogensen, O.[11] 2012 (abstract) Systematic review	follow-up for endometrial and ovarian cancer together	None of the identified studies supported a survival benefit from hospital-based follow-up after completion of primary treatment for endometrial or ovarian cancer. The methods for follow-up were of low-technology (gynecologic examination with or without ultrasound examination). Other technologies had a poor sensitivity and specificity in detecting recurrence. Substantial differences especially in frequency and applied methods were found between departments. Conclusion: The main purpose of follow-up after treatment for cancer is improved survival. Our review of the literature showed no evidence of a positive effect on survival in women followed after primary treatment of endometrial or ovarian cancer. The conception of follow-up among physicians, patients and their relatives therefore needs revision. Follow-up after treatment should have a clearly defined and evidence based purpose. Based on the existing literature, this purpose should presently focus on other endpoints than early detection of relapse and improved survival. These endpoints could be quality of life, treatment toxicity and economy.
Sartoni, E.[16] 2010	Systematic review of endometrial cancer	The overall recurrence rate is 13% and correlates with prognostic factors of the primary tumor. The anatomic sites of endometrial cancer relapse are mostly equivalently distributed between local (pelvic) and distant (abdominal and chest). Most endometrial cancer recurrences are symptomatic, even if vaginal vault relapses represent a particular setting of a more frequently asymptomatic disease. Most of endometrial cancer recurrences occur within 3 years since diagnosis of primary tumor. Long-term surveillance programs are mainly addressed to the early detection of recurrence, the rationale of follow-up being that an earlier diagnosis of relapse correlates with lower morbidity and mortality rates. Adjunctive

References		Recommendations
		objectives of routine follow-up are identification of treatment complications and detection of possible second tumors associated with endometrial cancer. No rationale (examination sensitivity/sensibility, cost-effectiveness, or patient's survival benefit) is available today for any particular follow-up protocol; follow-up procedures should probably be tailored according to different prognostic factors; only physical examination, including pelvic-rectal examination, showed some utility in detecting recurrence. In this uncertain setting, follow-up interval should be defined with consideration of the patient's will.
Other types of studies		
Mellon, A.[10] 2014 (abstract)	Study of nurse led follow-up	The Clinical Nurse Consultant was able to identify and address the needs of the women in a holistic manner, assessing for signs of recurrence, managing side effects of treatment and providing psychological reassurance. Over 90% of women attending the nurse led follow up clinic have been satisfied with the service and no adverse outcomes have been identified from this form of follow up. Conclusion Nurse led follow up in gynaecological cancer utilises the advanced skills of the Clinical Nurse Consultant and has been found to be an effective and satisfactory form of surveillance for these women. Nurse led follow up may be expanded to include other low risk patient groups in the future.
Nicolaije, K.A.H.[12] 2013	Questionnaire sent to patients who had stage 1 or 2 endometrial cancer to ask about follow-up (Netherlands)	742 (77%) endometrial cancer survivors returned a completed questionnaire. Overall, 19% reported receiving more follow-up visits than recommended by the guidelines. Overconsumption of follow-up care was lowest in follow-up year 1 (13%), and highest in follow-up years 6-10 (27%). In addition, overconsumption was associated with having a comorbid condition, a higher score on the worry subscale, and hospital of treatment. Most patients (83%) felt comfortable with their follow-up schedule. Patients in follow-up years 6-10 felt least comfortable (69%). CONCLUSION: Follow-up frequency was higher than recommended in a large group of endometrial cancer survivors, mainly in follow-up years 6-10. Moreover, a substantial variation in follow-up practice was observed between the different hospitals. Despite limited evidence to support the use of intensive follow-up schedules, the current study suggests that intensive routine follow-up after endometrial cancer continues to be standard practice. Possibly, patients should be better informed in order to reduce overconsumption and worry
Smits, A.[17] 2015	Nurse led telephone follow-up	At time of study, 118 women were receiving NLFU (nurse led follow-up), and 178 women were receiving CFU (conventional follow-up). Results: Seventy-eight women in NLFU and 112 women in CFU completed the questionnaires. Quality-of-life outcomes and satisfaction levels did not differ between both forms of follow-up. Almost all women in NLFU (98%) found NLFU an acceptable alternative to CFU.

References		Recommendations
Vistad, I.[19] 2011	A questionnaire regarding follow-up routines was mailed to 31 gynecological departments in Norway	The questionnaire study showed that the number of controls varied from eight to 16 during the first five years' post-treatment. Routine investigations such as chest X-ray and cytology were frequently used in endometrial and cervical cancer. All departments used CA-125 in follow-up of ovarian cancer patients. Reviewing the literature, 19 RCTs of varying methodological quality were identified for colorectal and breast cancers, and none for gynecologic cancer. Different follow-up models were compared, and most studies concluded that there were no significant differences in the detection of recurrence, overall survival, and quality of life between the studied groups.
Vistad, I.[18] 2012	An anonymous e-survey was sent to all members of the European Society of Gynecological Oncology and the Nordic Society of Gynecologic Oncology	The number of visits recommended by a majority of the responders was in line with current guidelines. The use of surveillance tests varied considerably. Significantly more responders from low economy countries preferred conventional hospital follow-up for all patients compared with responders from high economy countries, who considered follow-up by GPs adequate in low-risk groups ($p < 0.001$).

Table 3: Ongoing studies

Title	Description
Telephone Follow-up After Treatment for Endometrial Cancer (TEACUP) NCT01610375	The aim of this study is to investigate the feasibility, safety and accuracy of a telephone follow-up for women previously treatment for endometrial cancer. To achieve this aim, potentially eligible women attending the Queensland Centre for Gynaecological Cancer (QCGC) outpatient clinic for review following previous treatment for endometrial cancer will be recruited by this study. The study aims to recruit all new patients as well as all patients who return to QCGC for their follow-up and who had treatment within the previous 2 years. The proposed project will involve generation of an evidence-based checklist of signs and symptoms of disease recurrence from a thorough literature review. The generated symptom checklist will be pilot tested and the refined symptom checklist will be used to follow study participants over a period of 12 months.
ENdometrial Cancer SURvivors' Follow-up carE (ENSURE): Less is More? (ENSURE) NCT02413606	Study design: Dutch multicentre randomized controlled trial with a 5 year follow-up. Patients (n=282) are randomized in an intervention group with 4 follow-up visits during 3 years, and a control group with 10-13 follow-up visits during 5 years, according to the Dutch guideline. Patients are asked to fill out a questionnaire at baseline, 6, 12, 36 and 60 months. Patient inclusion will take two years (if 60% of the patients participate). Outcomes: Primary: Patient satisfaction with follow-up care and cost-effectiveness. Secondary: health care use, adherence to schedule, health-related quality of life, fear of recurrence, anxiety and depression, information provision, recurrence, survival Patients: Stage 1A and 1B low-risk endometrial cancer patients, for whom adjuvant radiotherapy is not indicated

Title	Description
Follow-up of Endometrial Cancer Patients (OPAL) NCT01853865	The present study is conducted, to elucidate the value of follow-up examinations in endometrial cancer patients. Specifically the objective is to compare hospital-based follow-up examinations with instruction in self-referral in stage I endometrial cancer patients.
Trial Between Two Follow up Regimens With Different Test Intensity in Endometrial Cancer Treated Patients (TOTEM) NCT00916708	This study aims to compare two different follow up regimens with different test intensity in endometrial cancer treated patients. If eligibility criteria are satisfied and the written informed consensus is obtained, patients are stratified inside the centre according to their risk level: • Group 1 : patients at low risk of recurrence [stage IA G1 and stage IA G2] • Group 2 : patients at high-risk of recurrence [≥ stage IA G3] (Ethics Committee amendment of 14th September 2010, use new 2010 FIGO classification for endometrial cancer!) Patients will be randomized in two regimens of follow up: 1. Minimalist (Arm 1) 2. Intensive (Arm 2)

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Search Strategy for Medline and EMBASE:

1. neoplasm.mp.
2. cancer.mp.
3. (cancer or carcinoma).mp. [mp=ti, ab, hw, tn, ot, dm, mf, dv, kw, fs, nm, kf, px, rx, ui, tx, ct]
4. follow$.ti.
5. follow$.mp.
6. (endometrium or endometrial).mp. [mp=ti, ab, hw, tn, ot, dm, mf, dv, kw, fs, nm, kf, px, rx, ui, tx, ct]
7. animal/ not (exp human/ or humans/)
8. (comment or letter or editorial or note or erratum or short survey or news or newspaper article or patient education handout or case report or historical article).pt.
9. (editorial or note or letter erratum or short survey).pt. or abstract report/ or letter/ or case study/
10. 1 or 2 or 3
11. 4 or 5
12. 10 and 6
13. 12 and 11
14. 13 not 7
15. 8 or 9
16. 14 not 15
17. limit 16 to english language
18. limit 17 to yr="2006 -Current"
19. follow-up.mp. [mp=ti, ot, ab, hw, tn, dm, mf, dv, kw, fs, nm, kf, px, rx, an, eu, pm, ui, tx, sh, ct]
20. follow-up.tw.
21. 10 and 18
22. 10 and 19
23. 6 and 22
24. limit 23 to english language
25. limit 24 to yr="2006 -Current"
26. 25 not 15
27. 26 not 7

DEFINITIONS OF REVIEW OUTCOMES

1. **EDUCATION AND INFORMATION** – EDUCATION AND INFORMATION means that a Clinical Expert and/or Expert Panel has reviewed new evidence pertaining to the guideline topic and determined that the guideline is out of date or has become less relevant. The document will no longer be tracked or updated but may still be useful for academic or other informational purposes.

The document is moved to a separate section of our website and each page is watermarked with the words “EDUCATION AND INFORMATION.”

2. **ENDORSED** – ENDORSED means that a Clinical Expert and/or Expert Panel has reviewed new evidence pertaining to the guideline topic and determined that the guideline is still useful as guidance for clinical decision making. A document may be endorsed because the Expert Panel feels the current recommendations and evidence are sufficient, or it may be endorsed after a literature search uncovers no evidence that would alter the recommendations in any important way.

3. **UPDATE** – UPDATE means the Clinical Expert and/or Expert Panel recognizes that the new evidence pertaining to the guideline topic makes changes to the existing recommendations in the guideline necessary but these changes are more involved and significant than can be accomplished through the Document Assessment and Review process. The Expert Panel advises that an update of the document be initiated. Until that time, the document will still be available as its existing recommendations are still of some use in clinical decision making, unless the recommendations are considered harmful.