

Having a family member under 50 diagnosed with pancreatic cancer increases risk

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A person who has multiple family members with pancreatic cancer ("familial pancreatic cancer") is six times as likely to develop that cancer. This risk is even higher, nine times that of the general population, if one of their relatives developed their cancer under the age of 50, according to a new study published online January 12 in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*.

Young-onset cancer is a hallmark of many familial cancer syndromes, but it was not clear whether family members of young-onset familial [pancreatic cancer](#) patients were at greater risk than family members of older-onset patients.

Alison P. Klein, Ph.D., at Sol Goldman Pancreatic Cancer Research Center at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine in Baltimore, and colleagues compared the observed incidence of pancreatic cancer in over 9,000 individuals from 1,718 families. Standardized incidence ratios for familial pancreatic cancer and for sporadic pancreatic cancer were calculated with data from the National Familial Pancreas Tumor Registry (<http://pathology.jhu.edu/pancreas/nfptr/>) and compared with those from the Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results database.

Relatives of familial pancreatic cancer patients had a more than six-fold higher incidence of pancreatic cancer than the general population. Those with relatives diagnosed before the age of 50 years had a more than ninefold higher incidence. In contrast, individuals with just a single relative with pancreatic cancer were at twice the risk of pancreatic cancer whether or not the relative with pancreatic cancer was diagnosed before or after the age of 50.

"These data should help to further inform risk assessment and subsequent early detection screening of individuals at high risk of developing pancreatic cancer," the authors write.

Study limitations: Some FPC family members underwent pancreatic cancer screening, which could have increased or hastened disease detection. Also, often data were obtained from a next of kin proxy, and only 66% of prospective cancers could be confirmed by medical records.

Provided by Journal of the National Cancer Institute

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