

Study examines presence of uterine cancers at the time of hysterectomy using morcellation

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Among women undergoing a minimally invasive hysterectomy using electric power morcellation, uterine cancers were present in 27 per 10,000 women at the time of the procedure, according to a study published by *JAMA*. There has been concern that this procedure, in which the uterus is fragmented into smaller pieces, may result in the spread of undetected malignancies.

Despite the commercial availability of electric power morcellators for 2 decades, accurate estimates of the prevalence of [malignancy](#) at the time of electric power morcellation (in this study referred to as morcellation) have been lacking, according to background information in the article.

Jason D. Wright, M.D., of the Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, New York, and colleagues used a large insurance database to investigate the prevalence of underlying [cancer](#) in [women](#) who underwent uterine morcellation. The database includes more than 500 hospitals capturing 15 percent of hospitalizations.

The researchers identified 232,882 women who underwent minimally invasive hysterectomy from 2006-2012; morcellation was performed in 36,470 (15.7 percent). Among those who underwent morcellation, 99 cases of [uterine cancer](#) were identified at the time of the procedure, a prevalence of 27/10,000. Other malignancies and precancerous abnormalities were also detected. Among women who underwent morcellation, advanced age was associated with underlying cancer and endometrial hyperplasia (a condition characterized by overgrowth of the lining of the uterus).

"Although morcellators have been in use since 1993, few studies have described the prevalence of unexpected pathology at the time of

hysterectomy. Prevalence information is the first step in determining the risk of spreading cancer with morcellation," the authors write. "Patients considering morcellation should be adequately counseled about the prevalence of cancerous and precancerous conditions prior to undergoing the [procedure](#)."

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