

## **Prospective study of talc use and ovarian cancer.**

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**BACKGROUND:** Perineal talc use has been associated with an increased risk of ovarian cancer in a number of case-control studies; however, this association remains controversial because of limited supporting biologic evidence and the potential for recall bias or selection bias in case-control studies.

In this study, we conducted a prospective analysis of perineal talc use and the risk of ovarian cancer.

**METHODS:** The Nurses' Health Study is a prospective study of 121 700 female registered nurses in the United States who were aged 30-55 years at enrollment in 1976. Talc use was ascertained in 1982 by use of a self-administered questionnaire: after exclusions, 78 630 women formed the cohort for analysis. Three hundred seven epithelial ovarian cancers subsequently diagnosed in this cohort through June 1, 1996, were confirmed by medical record review and met inclusion criteria. Proportional hazards models by use of pooled logistic regression were used to derive relative risks (RRs) and 95% confidence intervals (CIs).

**RESULTS:** In 1982, 40.4% (n = 31 789) of the cohort reported ever using talc, and 14.5% (n = 11 411) reported ever using talc daily. We observed no overall association with ever talc use and epithelial ovarian cancer (multivariate RR = 1.09; 95% CI = 0.86-1.37) and no increase in risk of ovarian cancer with increasing frequency of use. There was a modest elevation in risk for ever talc use and invasive serous ovarian cancer (multivariate RR = 1.40; 95% CI = 1.02-1.91). The risk of epithelial ovarian cancer for talc users was not greater among women who had never had a tubal ligation (multivariate RR = 0.97; 95% CI = 0.71-1.32).

**CONCLUSION:** Our results provide little support for any substantial association between perineal talc use and ovarian cancer risk overall; however, perineal talc use may modestly increase the risk of invasive serous ovarian cancer.

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