

Gynaecological Cancers — CGCS asks Where are We Now?

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Gynaecological cancers represent the **second leading cancer in women in Barbados**, and yes, awareness about these cancers is improving and perhaps we are detecting some cases earlier than before as a result of this — but, does that mean that outcomes are getting better? **Are we seeing a reduction in cases and mortality?**

'Where are we now?' was the main discussion at the **Caribbean Gynaecological Cancer Society's** inaugural meeting, where gynaecologists from the region met to discuss the field of gynaecologic oncology, and, it brought up some interesting points. Firstly, it **showed that BNR data matched what doctors were seeing from day to day — a rise in endometrial cancers over cancers of the cervix**. While this is unique to Barbados the trend of increased endometrial cancer was being seen across other countries represented—Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica and the Bahamas.

What is even more alarming is that a high percentage of these cases are still being found at the later stages, when treatment is more complicated.

WHY?

There is no adequate screening method for ovarian/endometrial cancers. **Pap smears only detect cervical cancers**. This dilemma often requires that women discuss their risk factors and symptoms with their gynaecologist and has increased the need for the field of **Gynaecologic Oncology—a subspecialty service to adequately diagnose and plan treatments for women with these cancers—incorporating multidisciplinary approach areas** including surgery, chemotherapy and radiotherapy.

GYNAECOLOGICAL ONCOLOGY - LESSONS LEARNED

The Trinidadian case study presented by Dr Gordon Naryansingh expressed the hard work that was needed to establish this field and the success that can be achieved.

The team from Barbados, under the leadership of Dr Wayne Welch and Dr Vikash Chatrani, continues to make great strides in establishing this subspecialty service as well astoward greater quality of care and advanced treatments and improved outcomes.

The role of the BNR continues to be important in tracking the progress and success of screening methods and providing doctors with the data they need to focus and guide cancer control initiatives.

Look out for Upcoming seminars on Gynaecological Cancers and Death Certification!