

# Screening for Pancreatic Cancer: Recommendation Statement: United States Preventive Services Task Force

United States Preventive Services Task Force

## Citation

United States Preventive Services Task Force. *Screening for Pancreatic Cancer: Recommendation Statement: United States Preventive Services Task Force*. The Internet Journal of Oncology. 2004 Volume 2 Number 2.

## Abstract

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) last addressed screening for pancreatic cancer in the 1996 Guide to Clinical Preventive Services and recommended against screening for pancreatic cancer (D recommendation).<sup>1</sup> Since then, the USPSTF criteria to rate the strength of the evidence have changed. Therefore, the recommendation statement that follows has been updated and revised based on the current USPSTF methodology and rating of the strength of the evidence.<sup>2</sup> Explanations of the current USPSTF ratings and of the strength of overall evidence are given in Appendix A and Appendix B, respectively. This recommendation statement and the brief update "Screening for Pancreatic Cancer,"<sup>3</sup> are available through the USPSTF Web site (<http://www.preventiveservices.ahrq.gov>), through the National Guideline Clearinghouse™ (<http://www.guideline.gov>), and in print through the AHRQ Publications Clearinghouse (call 1-800-358-9295 or E-mail [ahrqpubs@ahrq.gov](mailto:ahrqpubs@ahrq.gov)).

## Figure 3



Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality

## Figure 2



US Department of Health and Human Services

## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommends against routine screening for pancreatic cancer in asymptomatic adults using abdominal palpation, ultrasonography, or serologic markers. D Recommendation.

The USPSTF found no evidence that screening for pancreatic cancer is effective in reducing mortality. There is a potential for significant harm due to the very low prevalence of pancreatic cancer, limited accuracy of available screening tests, the invasive nature of diagnostic tests, and the poor outcomes of treatment. As a result, the USPSTF concluded that the harms of screening for pancreatic cancer exceed any potential benefits.

## CLINICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Due to the poor prognosis of those diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, there is an interest in primary prevention. The evidence for diet-based prevention of pancreatic cancer is limited and conflicting. Some experts recommend lifestyle changes that may help to prevent pancreatic cancer, such as stopping the use of tobacco products, moderating alcohol intake, and eating a balanced diet with sufficient fruit and vegetables.
- Persons with hereditary pancreatitis may have a higher lifetime risk for developing pancreatic cancer<sup>4</sup>. However, the USPSTF did not review the effectiveness of screening these patients.

Corresponding author: Ned Calonge, MD, MPH, Chair, U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, c/o Program Director, USPSTF, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, 540 Gaither Road, Rockville, MD 20850, e-mail: [uspstf@ahrq.gov](mailto:uspstf@ahrq.gov).

Members of the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force\* are Alfred O. Berg, MD, MPH, Chair, USPSTF (Professor and Chair, Department of Family Medicine, University of Washington, Seattle, WA); Janet D. Allan, PhD, RN, CS, Vice-chair, USPSTF (Dean, School of Nursing, University of Maryland Baltimore, Baltimore, MD); Ned Calonge, MD, MPH (Acting Chief Medical Officer, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Denver, CO); Paul Frame, MD (Tri-County Family Medicine, Cohocton, NY, and Clinical Professor of Family Medicine, University of Rochester, Rochester, NY); Joxel Garcia, MD, MBA (Deputy Director, Pan American Health Organization, Washington, DC); Russell Harris, MD, MPH (Associate Professor of Medicine, Sheps Center for Health Services Research, University of North Carolina School of Medicine, Chapel Hill, NC); Mark S. Johnson, MD, MPH (Professor of Family Medicine, University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey-New Jersey Medical School, Newark, NJ); Jonathan D. Klein, MD, MPH (Associate Professor, Department of Pediatrics, University of Rochester School of

Medicine, Rochester, NY); Carol Loveland-Cherry, PhD, RN (Executive Associate Dean, School of Nursing, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI); Virginia A. Moyer, MD, MPH (Professor, Department of Pediatrics, University of Texas at Houston, Houston, TX); C. Tracy Orleans, PhD (Senior Scientist, The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Princeton, NJ); Albert L. Siu, MD, MSPH (Professor of Medicine, Chief of Division of General Internal Medicine, Mount Sinai School of Medicine, New York, NY); Steven M. Teutsch, MD, MPH (Senior Director, Outcomes Research and Management, Merck & Company, Inc., West Point, PA); Carolyn Westhoff, MD, MSc (Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology and Professor of Public Health, Columbia University, New York, NY); and Steven H. Woolf, MD, MPH (Professor, Department of Family Practice and Department of Preventive and Community Medicine and Director of Research, Department of Family Practice, Virginia Commonwealth University, Fairfax, VA).

\*Members of the Task Force at the time this recommendation was finalized. For a list of current Task Force members, go to <http://www.ahrq.gov/clinic/uspstfab.htm>.

## FIND MORE INFORMATION ABOUT

{image:3}

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality  
<http://www.ahrq.gov/>

## References

1. U.S. Preventive Services Task Force; Guide to Clinical Preventive Services. 2nd ed. Washington, DC: Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion; 1996.
2. Harris RP, Helfand M, Woolf SH, Lohr KN, Mulrow CD, Teutsch SM, Atkins D, for the Methods Word Group, third U.S. Preventive Services Task Force. Current methods of the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force: a review of the process. *Am J Prev Med*. 2001;20(3S):21-35.
3. Screening for Pancreatic Cancer: update of the evidence for the U.S Preventive Services Task Force. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. 2004. Available at <http://www.preventiveservices.ahrq.gov>
4. Lowenfels AB, Maisonneuve P, DiMagno EP, et al. Hereditary pancreatitis and the risk of pancreatic cancer. International Hereditary Pancreatitis Study Group. *J Natl Cancer Inst*. 1997;89:442-446.

**Author Information**

**United States Preventive Services Task Force**

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality , US Department of Health and Human Services