



## Chemoradiotherapy effective for cervical cancer

### Clinical question

How effective is chemoradiotherapy for patients with locally advanced cervical cancer?

### Bottom line

Compared with the same radiotherapy alone, chemoradiotherapy produced a 6% improvement in 5-year survival. A larger survival benefit was seen for the 2 further trials in which chemotherapy was administered after chemoradiotherapy. There was a significant survival benefit for both the group of trials that used platinum-based and non-platinum-based chemoradiotherapy, but no evidence of a difference in the size of the benefit by radiotherapy or chemotherapy dose or scheduling. Chemoradiotherapy also reduced local and distant recurrence and progression and improved disease-free survival. There was a suggestion of a difference in the size of the survival benefit with tumour stage, but not across other patient subgroups.

### Caveat

Currently there is insufficient evidence to suggest that any one treatment type, dose or schedule is better than any other. Acute haematological and gastrointestinal toxicity were increased with chemoradiotherapy, but data were too sparse for an analysis of late toxicity.

### Context

Since a 1999 National Cancer Institute clinical alert was issued,<sup>1</sup> chemoradiotherapy has become widely used in treating women with cervical cancer. Two subsequent systematic reviews found interpretation of the benefits was complicated and some important clinical questions were unanswered. This review is a meta-analysis updating individual patient data from all available randomised controlled trials.

### Cochrane Systematic Review

Chemoradiotherapy for Cervical Cancer Meta-analysis Collaboration. Reducing uncertainties about the effects of chemoradiotherapy for cervical cancer: individual patient data meta-analysis. Cochrane Reviews 2010, Issue 1. Article No. CD001758285. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD008285.

*This review contains 15 studies in 11 countries involving 3452 participants.*

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### Further references

1. National Cancer Institute. NCI Issues Clinical Announcement on Cervical Cancer: Chemotherapy plus Radiation Improves Survival. [www.nih.gov/news/pr/feb99/nci22.htm](http://www.nih.gov/news/pr/feb99/nci22.htm) 1999.

*PEARLS are succinct summaries of Cochrane Systematic Reviews for primary care practitioners – developed by the Cochrane Primary Care Field, New Zealand Branch of the Australasian Cochrane Centre at the Department of General Practice and Primary Health Care, University of Auckland and funded by the New Zealand Guidelines Group. New Zealanders can access the Cochrane Library free via [www.nzgg.org.nz](http://www.nzgg.org.nz)*

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