

Appendix C: Expert Panel

Although the literature on cervical cancer is voluminous, information on this disease as it specifically relates to elderly women is scarce. To supplement the literature review that formed the basis of this paper and the assumptions used in the cost-effectiveness model, the contractors convened a small panel of experts to discuss the literature and to elicit information based on the clinical experience of these experts. The panel, consisting of epidemiologists, pathologists, and gynecologic oncologists, focused primarily on three areas:

- the duration of the various states of cervical neoplasia,
- the probability of progression or regression from each of the preinvasive states, and
- diagnostic and treatment protocols for each state.

Other factors that might affect the yield of screening in elderly women, such as characteristics of the Pap test in this age group, utilization of screening age-specific rates of disease, and cohort effects, were also discussed.

Prior to the meeting, each expert was furnished with a synopsis of the relevant literature and was asked to fill out a questionnaire based on his or her interpretation of that literature and personal clinical experience. The panel then met for 3 hours and discussed their initial responses to the questionnaire, after which each expert again independently filled out the same questionnaire. The discussion emphasized identifying a reasonable range for model assumptions and did not specifically attempt to come to consensus on any issue. A list of participants follows.

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