



Contact: Michele Fisher
Media Relations Specialist
732/235-9872
fisherm2@umdnj.edu

Conservative Management Can be an Option for Elderly Men with Early-Stage Prostate Cancer
*Lead Researcher at The Cancer Institute of New Jersey Highlights Study Results at
ASCO-sponsored Genitourinary Cancers Symposium in San Francisco*

New Brunswick, N.J., February 13, 2008 –Most elderly men diagnosed with early-stage prostate cancer, who survive ten years, will be free from significant cancer-related complications and are more likely to die of ailments other than prostate cancer. That is according to researchers at The Cancer Institute of New Jersey (CINJ), whose new study shows that conservative management can be a viable option to older men diagnosed with Stage I or Stage II prostate cancer in preserving their quality of life in their later years. CINJ is a center of excellence of UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School.

Grace Lu-Yao, Ph.D., M.P.H., cancer epidemiologist at CINJ and associate professor of environmental and occupational medicine at UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, is the lead investigator on the study. She says it's critical for patients to weigh the risk of treatment side effects and the risk of cancer-related complications if the disease is left untreated, "Most men are diagnosed with prostate cancer after age 65 and may receive modest benefit from aggressive cancer therapies. Since it may take more than a decade for PSA-detected cancers to develop cancer-related symptoms, it may not be necessary to rush into a treatment option, which could potentially have adverse health affects. For many of them, they will be able to live their lives with prostate cancer, but not die from it."

The study, "Prostate Disease Trajectory of Untreated Localized Prostate Cancer in Elderly Men: A Population-Based Study," will be presented at this year's annual Genitourinary Cancers Symposium, which is sponsored by the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO), and begins tomorrow in San Francisco. Using information from the U.S. Surveillance, Epidemiology and End Results (SEER) database, investigators looked at more than 9,000 men with an average age of 77, who were diagnosed between 1992 and 2002 and were not initially treated for the disease within six months of diagnosis.

Dr. Lu-Yao says this study is significant in helping to bridge the knowledge gap regarding the natural history of PSA (prostate specific antigen)-detected cancers, since previous studies utilized data from an era when PSA was not widely available. The PSA blood test can detect prostate cancer six to 13 years earlier than cases that are diagnosed clinically.

For men with low- or moderate-grade prostate cancer, only six-percent died from the illness ten years post diagnosis. For those with high-grade prostate cancer, the risk of dying from the disease is higher, at about 23 percent a decade after diagnosis. These findings are more favorable than those found in previous studies based on clinically diagnosed cases. The study is the largest to date involving this particular population in relation to early stage prostate cancer.

Lu-Yao stresses that the results of this study might not be applicable to younger men. She notes elderly men who are diagnosed with early-stage prostate cancer and choose conservative management should have their PSA levels monitored on a regular basis and keep a regular dialogue going with their doctor about their options.

About The Cancer Institute of New Jersey

The Cancer Institute of New Jersey is the state's first and only National Cancer Institute-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center, and is dedicated to improving the prevention, detection, treatment and care of patients with cancer. CINJ's physician-scientists engage in translational research, transforming their laboratory discoveries into clinical practice quite literally bringing research to life. The Cancer Institute of New Jersey is a center of excellence of UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. To support CINJ, please call the Cancer Institute of New Jersey Foundation at 1-888-333-CINJ.

The Cancer Institute of New Jersey Network is comprised of hospitals throughout the state and provides a mechanism to rapidly disseminate important discoveries into the community. Partner Hospital: Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital. Affiliate Hospitals: Bayshore Community Hospital, CentraState Healthcare System, Cooper University Hospital*, Jersey Shore University Medical Center, JFK Medical Center, Morristown Memorial Hospital, Overlook Hospital, Raritan Bay Medical Center, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital at Hamilton (CINJ-Hamilton), Saint Peter's University Hospital, Somerset Medical Center, Southern Ocean County Hospital, The University Hospital/UMDNJ-New Jersey Medical School*, and University Medical Center at Princeton. *Academic Affiliate

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