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Impact of human cytomegalovirus infection on survival of patients with Ovarian Cancer

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Human cytomegalovirus (HCMV) has been detected in various types of tumors. We studied the prevalence of HCMV in ovarian cancer and its relation to clinical outcomes. Paraffin-embedded tissues obtained prospectively from 60 patients with ovarian cancer, 30 patients with benign ovarian cystadenoma and 10 patients with normal ovarian tissue were analyzed for expression of HCMV immediate-early protein (IE) and HCMV tegument protein (pp65) by immunohistochemistry. Extensive HCMV-IE protein expression was detected in 73% of ovarian cancers and 23% of benign tumors; pp65 was detected in 65% of ovarian cancers and 13% of benign tumors. A higher grade of HCMV infection

was associated with higher stage of disease. Extensive HCMV-pp65 expression was associated with shorter median overall survival than focal expression (37 versus 45 months, $P=0.04$). At study closure, 55% of ovarian cancer patients with focal pp65 expression were alive versus 28% of patients with extensive pp65 expression ($P=0.03$). Thus, HCMV proteins are detected at different levels in ovarian tumors and benign cystadenomas. Ovarian cancer patients with focal HCMV-pp65 expression in their tumors lived longer, highlighting a need for in-depth studies of the oncomodulatory role of HCMV in ovarian cancer.

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