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CURRENT ONCOLOGICAL TUMORS OCCURRING IN WOMEN

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Annotation: This article discusses the most common oncological diseases among women today — breast and cervical tumors. It highlights their causes, early symptoms, and diagnostic methods. In addition, the importance of regular preventive check-ups and a healthy lifestyle in preventing these diseases is emphasized.

Keywords: Oncology, women's health, breast tumor, cervical tumor, uterine tumor, ovarian tumor, prevention.

Oncology is a branch of medicine that studies tumor diseases, including their origin, development, diagnosis, and treatment methods. Today, oncological diseases are considered a serious global health issue. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), approximately 20 million new cancer cases are diagnosed worldwide each year, with more than 20,000 cases detected annually in Uzbekistan. Globally, around 9.7 million people die from oncological (cancer) diseases every year.

In particular, breast and cervical cancers are among the most common oncological diseases currently spreading among women. These diseases can be successfully treated if diagnosed early; however, in the later stages, they often lead to severe consequences.

Breast cancer is a tumor that develops in the tissues of the mammary glands. The symptoms include changes in the size, shape, or appearance of the breasts, as well as changes in the skin. A dense lump different from the surrounding tissues may appear, accompanied by redness of the breast or part of it, or changes in the discharge from the nipple. As the disease progresses, symptoms such as bone pain, swollen lymph nodes, shortness of breath, or yellowing of the skin (of the breast or the whole body) may occur.

Risk factors for the development of breast cancer include obesity, lack of physical activity, alcohol consumption, hormone replacement therapy during menopause, exposure to ionizing radiation, early onset of menstruation, delayed or absent menopause, and a family history of breast cancer. Approximately 5–10% of cases are caused by inherited genetic predisposition.

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Medications such as tamoxifen or raloxifene may be used to prevent breast cancer in individuals at high risk. In some high-risk cases, surgical removal of both breasts may serve as a preventive measure. Patients diagnosed with cancer may undergo various treatments, including surgery, radiation therapy, chemotherapy, hormone therapy, and targeted therapy. Surgical options include breast-conserving surgery and mastectomy. Breast reconstruction can be performed either during the initial surgery or later. For patients with metastatic cancer (when the disease has spread to other parts of the body), treatment focuses mainly on improving quality of life and alleviating symptoms, as the chances of full recovery are low once the disease becomes advanced.

The prognosis of breast cancer varies depending on the stage of the disease and the patient's age. In the United Kingdom and the United States, the five-year survival rate (the percentage of patients who live at least five years after diagnosis) has reached 80–90%. However, in developing countries, the five-year survival rate remains significantly lower. Breast cancer is the leading type of cancer among women, accounting for about 25% of all female cancer cases worldwide. In 2018 alone, this disease was diagnosed in 2 million women and caused approximately 627,000 deaths.

Cervical cancer is a type of cancer that develops in the cervix — the lower part of the uterus that connects to the vagina. This vital part of the female reproductive system serves as a passageway for menstrual blood, sperm, and childbirth. Cervical cancer begins when healthy cells in the cervix undergo abnormal changes, leading to uncontrolled growth and the formation of a tumor.

The primary cause of cervical cancer is a persistent infection with high-risk types of the **human papillomavirus (HPV)**, a sexually transmitted virus. Although most HPV infections are cleared by the body's immune system, high-risk strains such as **HPV-16** and **HPV-18** can cause long-term cellular changes in the cervix, increasing the risk of cancer over time. Early detection through regular screening — such as **Pap smear** and **HPV testing** — plays a crucial role in preventing cervical cancer and improving treatment outcomes.

Cervical cancer primarily develops due to persistent infection with high-risk types of HPV. However, several additional factors can increase the risk of developing the disease. Understanding these causes and risk factors is essential for prevention and early detection.

1. **Persistent HPV infection:**

High-risk HPV strains, particularly HPV-16 and HPV-18, are responsible for the majority of cervical cancer cases. These strains disrupt normal cellular function and can cause precancerous changes that may progress to cancer over time.

2. **Smoking:**

Tobacco use weakens the immune system, making it more difficult for the body to clear HPV infections. Additionally, carcinogenic chemicals in tobacco can damage cervical cells, further increasing cancer risk.

3. **Weakened immune system:**

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Conditions that impair the immune system — such as **HIV infection** or long-term use of **immunosuppressive medications** (for example, after organ transplantation) — reduce the body's ability to fight HPV infections, raising the likelihood of persistent infection and subsequent cervical cancer.

4. **Long-term use of oral contraceptives:**

Research indicates that women who use oral contraceptives for five years or longer may have an increased risk of cervical cancer. The exact reason for this association is unclear but may involve hormonal changes affecting the cervix.

5. **Multiple full-term pregnancies:**

Women who have had three or more full-term pregnancies may face a higher risk of cervical cancer. Hormonal changes and cervical trauma during childbirth may contribute to this increased risk.

6. **Early sexual activity:**

Becoming sexually active at a young age increases exposure to HPV because the cervix during adolescence is more susceptible to infection.

Although these factors contribute to the risk of cervical cancer, **regular screening** through Pap smear and HPV testing, **HPV vaccination**, and **adopting a healthy lifestyle** can significantly reduce the likelihood of developing the disease.

Conclusion

Cervical cancer is a preventable and treatable disease when detected early. Regular screening, vaccination, and awareness are essential in reducing its prevalence. Women should prioritize their health by scheduling regular gynecological check-ups to ensure early detection and timely intervention. Taking proactive measures can greatly reduce the impact of cervical cancer.

Breast and cervical cancers are currently among the most serious oncological diseases threatening women's health. These cancers often progress silently in their early stages, making **regular medical examinations and screening** vital for early detection.
For **breast cancer**, self-examination, regular medical check-ups, and mammography when necessary are key preventive methods; while for **cervical cancer**, Pap testing, HPV testing, and vaccination serve as the main preventive measures.

By taking a responsible approach to their health and maintaining a healthy lifestyle, women can lower the risk of developing these diseases. **Early diagnosis and timely treatment** can save countless lives.

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