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WINTER 2012 #131

It's HERE! DES Action's Health History Questionnaire

Share Your Health Experiences NOW!

By Kari Christianson and Fran Howell

Over the years, DES Action USA has received thousands of inquires from DES Mothers, Daughters, Sons and Grandchildren, asking if a particular health problem might be related to DES exposure. In many cases our answer has been, "No one knows."

DES Action is taking steps to help identify whether certain health conditions – beyond those already known – appear more frequently among DES-exposed women and men than among unexposed people, just as we did with our first Health History questionnaire in 1984. Once again, Deborah Wingard, Ph.D., an epidemiologist and Professor in the Department of Family & Preventive Medicine at the University of California San Diego is leading this effort with us.

The 2012 Health History questionnaire is informal. It is not intended to be a scientific study. Rather, your responses will provide a crucial "look" at what's been happening with our health over the past 25+ years. If any trends are suggested by the answers received, we will share this information with researchers who can follow-up with further study.

Because of decades of research by the National Cancer Institute DES Follow-up Study, we do know that many conditions are related to DES (see VOICE 130), and we know that many conditions are not related to DES exposure. With so many millions of people exposed, we expect to hear about the usual range of physical and psychological problems that are found in the general population. At the same time these "anecdotal" reports do concern us, particularly when they begin to sound repetitive.

A large number of possible conditions are listed on the questionnaire, to help you remember your own health

experience. We encourage you to add other health issues you have experienced. Remember, most of the conditions listed have not been associated with DES exposure, and we are not suggesting that they are related. However, many investigators studying DES

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Cancer Risk Remains a Concern for DES Daughters As They Age

"Higher incidence of clear cell adenocarcinoma of the cervix and vagina among women born between 1947 and 1971 in the United States," *Cancer Causes Control* (2012) 23:207-211, Emily K. Smith, Mary C. White, et al., published online: October 21, 2011 and available at: http://www.springerlink.com/content/2u260l70x11n26mw/

Reviewed by Fran Howell

New statistics from a population-based assessment tell an unsettling story none of us wanted to hear. While it is well documented that young DES Daughters are at increased risk for clear cell adenocarcinoma (CCA) of the vagina and cervix, this new analysis also suggests an elevated risk for DES Daughters as they age.

The assessment was done by researchers with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Division of Cancer and Prevention Control who used data from two federal cancer surveillance programs: the National Program of Cancer Registries (NPCR) from CDC and the Surveillance, Epidemiology and End Results (SEER) Program from the National Cancer Institute.

Clear cell adenocarcinoma diagnosis rates for women born between 1947 – 1971 were compared with reported CCA diagnosis rates for women born before and after that peak DES-use period.

By identifying CCA statistics for individuals born in years when DES was rarely prescribed, the scientists extrapolated expected numbers of CCA cases for those born during years when DES was the standard of care for problem pregnancies. What they found was disconcerting.

"More cases of CCA than expected were diagnosed among women aged 40-54 who were born when DES was frequently prescribed," says Mary C. White,

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DES Action USA

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Online Support Group for DES Daughters

Want to be in touch, via e-mail, with other DES Daughters? As a benefit of being a DES Action member, you can join the DES Action Daughters Online Support Group. That way you can ask questions and share experiences common only to those of us who are DES exposed.

To join the DES Action
Online Support Group simply send a blank e-mail to:

<u>DESactionDaughters-</u> <u>subscribe@yahoogroups.com</u>

You'll receive an e-mail back from Yahoo! Groups confirming your request to join. It offers two registration options and the easiest is Option 2. Click "Reply" so the note is sent back.

Once we've checked to be sure you are a current DES Action member, you'll receive a welcome to the group letter explaining how to send messages. Then you can participate in the e-mail conversations, or just quietly read and enjoy the learning experience.

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MISSION STATEMENT

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DES Health History Questionnaire

DES ACTION USA wishes to compile information on the health experiences of women and men exposed to DES. Many conditions will NOT be related to DES exposure. However, collecting clues in this way can help us alert the scientific community to possible areas of needed research. We hope that you will help us with this project by filling out the following questionnaire. Also, please pass a copy of this questionnaire, or the survey link on DES Action's webpage, to any DES-exposed person you know.

While we prefer that individuals complete their own questionnaire, there may be situations where a relative may need to complete the survey (i.e. a parent for a young child). If you complete the survey for someone else, please make sure that person is not completing the survey as well. If you need extra room, please use the comment section or additional sheets.

Alternatively, you may complete this quest Thank you!	ionnaire on Survey Monk	ey. Please see link on	our website: http://www.desaction.org
Are you completing this questionnaire (If a relative, please make sure yo			ner:
Is the person a DES-exposed:	Know for sure	Think so	
Mother			
Have you/they ever tried to obtain med Were the records received	•	· =	= '
Date of birth	Height	inches	
Current Age years	Weight	pounds	
Currently live in: USA	Canada Euro	pe Australia	Other:
REMEMBER, MANY OF The Please indicate if ever diagnosed with Please also state at what age each was	any of the following con		TED TO DES EXPOSURE.
EVERYONE		Approximate Ac	ge First Diagnosed
Allergies	no y	es	
Asthma	no y	es	
Dental – gum disease	no y	es	
Dental – other problems	no y	es	
Depression	no y	es	
Diabetes	no y	es	
Fractures	no y	es	
How many?			
Heart disease	no y	es	

EVERYONE		Approximate	Ag	e Fi	rst Diagnosed
Herpes	no	yes			
Shingles	no	yes			
Kidney or bladder problems	no	yes			
Lupus	no	yes			
Multiple sclerosis	no	yes			
Rheumatoid arthritis	no	yes			
Thyroid disease (hypo, hyper, Graves disease)	no	yes			
Other autoimmune condition					
	no	yes			
	no	yes			
Other conditions (not in following lists):					
	no	yes			
	no	yes			
MOTHERS ONLY					
Cystic (lumpy) breasts	no	yes			
Breast cancer	no	yes			
Cancer of the uterus	no	yes			
Other cancer:	no	yes			
	no	yes			
SONS / GRANDSONS ONLY		. •			•
Birth defect:	no	yes			
Hip dysplasia	no	yes			
Hypospadias	no	yes			
Undescended testicle	no	yes			
Epididymal cysts (benign tumors on testicles)	no	yes			
Infection or inflammation of testes	no	yes			
Low sperm count	no	yes			
Poor sperm quality	no	yes			
Infertility / fertility problems	no	yes			
Enlarged prostate	no	yes			
Prostate cancer	no	yes			
Other prostate problems	no	yes			
Testicular cancer	no	yes			
Other cancer:	no	yes			
	no	yes			
DAUGHTERS / GRANDDAUGHTERS ONLY		 · -			
Birth defect:	no	yes			
Hip dysplasia	no	yes			

Approximate Age First Diagnosed

Adenosis (may cause vaginal mucus/discharge)	no	yes	
Cervical anomalies (collar, ridge, hood)	no	yes	
T-shaped uterus	no	yes	
Endometriosis	no	yes	
Ovarian cysts	no	yes	
Paraovarian cysts	no	yes	
Polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS)	no	yes	
Pelvic inflammatory disease (PID)	no	yes	
Uterine fibroids	no	yes	
Irregular periods	no	yes	
Until what age: years			
Painful periods (dysmenorrhea)	no	yes	
Poor cervical mucus	no	yes	
Luteal phase defect	no	yes	
Fallopian tube problems	no	yes	
Do not ovulate (prior to menopause)	no	yes	
High levels of prolactin	no	yes	
Pituitary tumors (these are non-malignant)	no	yes	
Ectopic pregnancy	no	yes	
Miscarriage	no	yes	
Preeclampsia	no	yes	
Hysterectomy	no	yes	
Age: years			
Menopause	no	yes	
Age: years			
Cystic (lumpy) breasts	no	yes	
Dysplasia (CIN)	no	yes	
Cancer in situ: where?			
	no	yes	
Clear cell cancer: vagina	no	yes	
Clear cell cancer: cervix	no	yes	
Other cancer of vagina or cervix:			
	no	yes	
Cancer of the uterus	no	yes	
Breast cancer	no	yes	
Other cancer:			
	no	yes	
	no	yes	

DES DAUGHTERS / GRANDDAUGHTERS ONLY Have you ever been pregnant?..... no IF YES, please complete the following: yes # pregnancies..... # live births..... # live births < 37 weeks (premature)..... # live births < 6 pounds..... Have you ever been diagnosed with infertility or problems getting pregnant? yes Did you ever use any of the following fertility treatments? Length of time # live births In vitro fertilization (IVF).....no yes years Fertility drugs without IVF......no yes years Artificial insemination (AI).....no ves years Other treatment: yes vears **DAUGHTERS or SONS** If your mother is no longer living, please state cause and age of death: **EVERYONE** Has a physician ever said your illness/health condition was/is unusual (e.g. at your age or number of times? _____ IF YES, please describe: Race/ethnicity - please check all that apply: (optional) Asian / Asian-American Black / African-American Hispanic Non-Hispanic White Other: Sexual orientation: (optional) Self-Identify: ____ Gay/Lesbian Heterosexual Bisexual Other comments (please use additional sheets if necessary):

REMEMBER. MANY OF THESE CONDITIONS WILL NOT BE RELATED TO DES EXPOSURE.

THANK YOU FOR HELPING US WITH THIS QUESTIONNAIRE!

Please return by June 15th:

Deborah Wingard, Ph.D.
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University of California, San Diego
La Jolla, CA 92093-0607

Health History Questionnaire *from page 1*

emphasize the need to monitor carefully the health experiences of those of us who are exposed to DES—prenatally, generationally or directly.

Please fill out the four-page questionnaire as completely as possible if you are a DES Mother, DES Daughter, DES Son, DES Granddaughter, DES Grandson or any subsequent DES Generation.

This Health History question-

naire is also available online at: http://www.desaction.org/index.html.

Whether filled in on paper or online, your responses are anonymous, private and secure. The deadline for completing the questionnaire is June 15, 2012.

A report on the findings of the Health History questionnaire will be published in the VOICE in a future issue, once Dr. Wingard has gathered your survey answers. Researchers tell DES Action that the time after receiving questionnaire responses is like "panning for gold," because it takes careful evaluation and comparison with national health records to determine if there is any association or a higher incidence of a health problem in the DES-exposed population.

This is an exciting opportunity for all of our DES voices to be heard. Your responses will help all of us learn more about how and if DES exposure is involved in our health experiences.

CCA Rate Spike from page 1

Sc.D., who heads the CDC's Epidemiology and Applied Research Branch. "Although we measured an increased risk, CCA is a very rare cancer even among women with known in utero exposure to DES. These analyses were possible because of the availability of high quality data from multiple population-based cancer registries over several years."

The analysis also picked up an increased incidence of CCA among young women in their late teens and early twenties, which is consistent with the already known increased CCA risk for DES Daughters in that age group.

"If the marked elevated risk of CCA among this birth cohort was due primarily to in utero DES exposure, our findings suggest that the large number of women exposed in utero to DES in the United States may still be at special risk for CCA as they grow older," says White. "This analysis could be repeated in the future to examine CCA risk as women age."

National Cancer Institute DES Follow-up Study researchers previously reported DES Daughters were 40 times more likely than women in the general population to develop CCA.

The respected American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists advises more frequent Pap/pelvic exams for DES Daughters than for unexposed women. And the National Cancer Institute tells DES Daughters they need a "four-quadrant" Pap in which cell samples are taken from all sides of the upper vagina, as well as from the cervix. Of note is that because of the increased vaginal cancer risk for DES Daughters, an annual

Pap is prudent to check the vagina even if the cervix is removed in a hysterectomy.

For directions to give your doctor on how a proper DES Daughter Pap/pelvic exam should be done go to: http://www.desaction.org/desdaughters.htm.

White suggests a question about prenatal DES exposure be included on medical intake forms. "Doctors should have this relevant information when recommending Pap exams based on a woman's risks."

As is often the case, those of us in the DES community stay better informed on DES issues than most doctors. Therefore, DES Daughters may want to share this new study when telling doctors they want a Pap/pelvic exam every year. There is clearly no known upper age limit for the increased CCA cervical/vaginal cancer risk for DES Daughters.

New Cervical Cancer Screening Guidelines Do Not Apply To DES Daughters

Annual Pap Tests Still Recommended

Recently released guidelines by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) call for less frequent Pap screenings for most women. The recommendations allow for skipping several years at a time for women with previously normal Pap results.

But for DES Daughters the critical portion of these guidelines is the disclaimer:

"This recommendation statement does not apply to women who have received a diagnosis of a high-grade precancerous cervical lesion or cervical cancer, women with in utero exposure to diethylstil-bestrol, or women who are immunocompromised (such as those who are HIV positive)."

DES Daughters may have to advocate for the health care they need by pointing this out to doctors. Remind your provider that you should

have cervical cancer screenings every year because of your increased risk for clear cell adenocarcinoma (CCA) of the vagina and/or cervix. This cancer is rare even for DES Daughters, but with a lifelong increased risk you should have an annual Pap exam.

If the doctor has any questions you can provide a link to the *Annals of Internal Medicine* web page: http://bit.ly/GEkzdL where the USPSTF guidelines are posted. The DES exclusion is the second sentence in the Recommendations Section.

After a hysterectomy DES Daughters still need to be screened every year to check for CCA of the vagina.

For a copy of the specific DES
Daughter Pap/pelvic exam directions to
give your doctor go to the DES Action
USA website: http://www.desaction.org
and click the DES Daughter link.



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Health History Survey Inside

HUGE VICTORY IN DES Breast Cancer Case

A federal magistrate in Boston ruled against 14 drug companies, including Eli Lilly, Merck and Bristol-Meyers Squibb, when she ordered them to negotiate damage settlements with 53 DES Daughters who claim their breast cancers are linked to prenatal DES exposure.

The drug makers responded with a motion asking U.S. Magistrate Judge Marianne Bowler to reconsider. But she held firm and denied their request.

During months of pretrial hearings, drug company lawyers tried to discredit scientific results from the National Cancer Institute DES Follow-up Study and expert witnesses put forth by the plaintiffs. However, the judge felt both the science and expert witnesses were compelling enough for the DES Daughters to proceed with their cases.

Facing the possibility of a trial and potentially huge jury verdicts, the drug makers agreed to hammer out settlements rather than continue in court. This is not a class action lawsuit, but rather a bundling together of DES breast cancer litigation.

Representing the DES Daughters is Washington D.C. Attorney Aaron

Levine, along with co-counsel Julie Oliver-Zhang. They say time is a factor. Since the start of this case, five of the DES Daughter plaintiffs have died, with four more battling stage IV breast cancer. "The drug companies can delay, stall and be difficult but the judge's ruling demonstrates that she intends to stay in control and keep negotiations on track between the parties," says Oliver-Zhang.

New DES breast cancer cases are being accepted by Aaron Levine's firm, as well as by other lawyers on the DES Action attorney list:

www.desaction.org.

PES VOICE