Kidney and Renal Pelvis Cancer Site Survey

Kidney cancer develops most often in people over 40. Risk factors that increase a person’s chance of developing the disease and have been associated with research on the onset of kidney cancer are smoking, obesity, high blood pressure, long-term dialysis, gender, Von Hippel-Landau syndrome, and occupations related to workplace exposure to certain chemicals. Most people with these risk factors do not develop kidney cancer, and most people who do develop the disease have no risk factors. Concerns about risk should be discussed with the person’s physician with appropriate surveillance scheduled.

Cancer that forms in the tissues of the kidneys in adults includes renal cell carcinoma that forms in the lining of the tubules in the kidney that filter the blood and remove waste products, and renal pelvis carcinoma that forms in the center of the kidney where urine collects. In children, kidney cancer includes Wilms’ tumor, which usually develops in young children. Treatment includes surgery and may also include chemotherapy and immunotherapy.

The number of adult kidney cancer patients first seen at Stony Brook University Medical Center (SBUMC) for their initial diagnosis and treatment has increased over the past five years. A site survey of these patients first encountered at SBUMC in 2000-2007 demonstrated a higher onset in the fourth and fifth decade than the national average of the sixth to the seventh decade, indicating that SBUMC clinicians are seeing patients diagnosed at a younger age than the national average. There is a higher incidence among males compared to females both at SBUMC and nationally. More than 50% of patients with kidney and renal pelvis cancer are diagnosed with localized tumors. Tumor spread to each of the other stages/categories of regional tissue, regional lymph nodes or distant metastatic sites occurs in 12 to 18% of patients. The primary treatment is most often surgery. Chemotherapy and immunotherapy may have a role in the treatment of individual kidney cancer patients and this is determined by consultation with oncology specialists who evaluate each individual patient in the light of available standard or emerging therapies. Patient outcomes at SBUMC are relatively in line with national statistics. Factors that affect five-year survival include the stage of the disease at diagnosis, treatment modalities utilized, and the patient’s other medical conditions as determined at the time of initial diagnosis and evaluation.