

BREAST CANCER INCIDENCE IN WOMEN WITH A HISTORY OF PROGESTERONE DEFICIENCY

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Abstract

In order to investigate the nature of the association of involuntarily delayed first birth and risk of breast cancer, 1083 white women who had been evaluated and treated for infertility from 1945–1965 were followed prospectively through April 1978 to ascertain their breast cancer incidence. These women were categorized as to the cause of infertility into two groups, those with endogenous progesterone deficiency (PD) and those with nonhormonal causes (NH). Women in the PD group had 5.4 times the risk of premenopausal breast cancer compared to women in the NH group. This excess risk could not be explained by differences between the two groups in ages at menarche or menopause, history of oral contraceptive use, history of benign breast disease or age at first birth. Women in the PD group also experienced a 10-fold increase in deaths from all malignant neoplasms compared to the NH group. The incidence of postmenopausal breast cancer did not differ significantly between the two groups.