

U.S. Preventive Services Task Force Issues Final Recommendation Statement on Screening for Pancreatic Cancer

Task Force continues to recommend against screening for pancreatic cancer in adults

WASHINGTON, D.C. – August 6, 2019 – The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (Task Force) today published a final recommendation statement on screening for pancreatic cancer. Based on the current evidence, the Task Force again recommends that adults without signs or symptoms should not be screened for pancreatic cancer. **This is a D recommendation.** This recommendation does not apply to adults who are at high risk for the disease.

Grade in this recommendation:

D: Not recommended.

[Learn more here](#)

While pancreatic cancer is rare, it can be deadly. It is the third most common cause of death from cancer in the United States. In most cases, pancreatic cancer is not found early enough to be treated effectively, and the likely outcomes are poor. Even when the cancer is found early and treated with surgery, the average survival is only 36 months.

“Pancreatic cancer is an uncommon, but devastating disease with low survival rates, even in those detected at early stages,” says Task Force member Chyke Doubeni, M.D., M.P.H. “Unfortunately, at the present time, screening for pancreatic cancer in people without any signs or symptoms would cause more harm than good and therefore should not be done.”

The Task Force found no evidence that screening for pancreatic cancer improves patient outcomes. Some tests that look for pancreatic cancer are invasive and can lead to pain, adverse reactions to anesthesia, false-positive results, and sometimes pancreatitis (swelling of the pancreas). If pancreatic cancer is found, followup treatment such as pancreatectomy (surgery to remove all or a portion of the pancreas) can have significant harms, including bleeding, weeks of recovery time, and a small risk of death.

“Clinicians need to be able to find pancreatic cancer earlier in its development, when it is more treatable,” says Task Force member Chien-Wen Tseng, M.D., M.P.H., M.S.E.E. “The Task Force is calling for more research on effective and accurate screening tests that can detect pancreatic cancer earlier and that lead to fewer harms.”

This final recommendation statement is consistent with the 2004 Task Force recommendation. Like the Task Force, no other organizations recommend screening for pancreatic cancer in the general population of adults with no signs or symptoms.

The Task Force’s final recommendation statement and corresponding evidence summary have been published online in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, as well as on the Task Force website at: <http://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org>. A draft version of the recommendation statement and evidence review were available for public comment from February 5, 2019, to March 4, 2019.

The Task Force is an independent, volunteer panel of national experts in prevention and evidence-based medicine that works to improve the health of all Americans by making evidence-based recommendations about clinical preventive services such as screenings, counseling services, and preventive medications.

Dr. Doubeni, M.D., M.P.H., is the inaugural director of the Mayo Clinic Center for Health Equity and Community Engagement Research, which addresses health disparities throughout the life course and advances the ideal of health equity locally and globally through research and community engagement. Dr. Doubeni is professor of family medicine at Mayo Clinic and provides clinical services in Mayo Clinic's Department of Family Medicine.

Dr. Tseng is the Hawaii Medical Service Association endowed chair in health services and quality research, a professor, and the associate research director in the Department of Family Medicine and Community Health at the University of Hawaii John A. Burns School of Medicine.

Contact: USPSTF Media Coordinator at Newsroom@USPSTF.net / (202) 572-2044