

## Spotlight

By Caroline Seydel

### **Endometrial Cancer Lurking in Lynch Syndrome Patients**

*Obermair et al.*

<http://doi.wiley.com/10.1002/ijc>

Lynch syndrome results in heightened risk of many types of cancer. Obermair et al. investigated whether women who had colorectal cancer associated with Lynch syndrome had a greater chance of later developing endometrial cancer. They found that nearly a quarter of patients with Lynch syndrome-associated colorectal cancer, if they don't have a hysterectomy, will develop endometrial cancer within 10 years.

Lynch syndrome is caused by a defect in the DNA mismatch repair system, resulting in genetic errors, particularly in repetitive stretches of DNA called microsatellites. These errors increase the risk of various different cancers, including colorectal and endometrial. Obermair *et al.* wondered whether a woman's risk of endometrial cancer went up after having Lynch syndrome-related colorectal cancer. Because endometrial cancer is frequently overlooked, knowing when a woman faces an increased risk could help improve diagnosis. To find out, they compiled data on about 1000 women who had colorectal cancer; about 100 with Lynch syndrome, and 900 without. Some 20% of the Lynch syndrome women later came down with endometrial cancer, while only 1% of the non-Lynch group developed the disease.

Among the women with Lynch syndrome, almost half underwent a hysterectomy after being diagnosed with colorectal cancer. None of those women died within 5 years of follow-up; however, 10% of those who did not have hysterectomy died within 5 years. While it's not proven that hysterectomy would improve survival, the authors suggest that the increased risk of endometrial cancer among Lynch syndrome patients warrants increased vigilance and regular screening.