



MORRIS F. COLLEN
RESEARCH
AWARD

"Our shared goal is to spare women unnecessary surgery while identifying cancers more promptly," said Dr. Suh-Burgmann. "We all want to practice in a way that maximizes benefits and minimizes harm."

Elizabeth Suh-Burgmann, MD

ULTRASOUND FOLLOW-UP OF SMALL ADNEXAL MASSES

Ob/Gyn, Diablo Service Area

Elizabeth Suh-Burgmann, MD, conducted a study to help clinicians everywhere better manage care for postmenopausal women with small adnexal masses.

Adnexal, or ovarian, masses in older women often trigger concerns about cancer. However, cancer is uncommon while benign masses are common. Masses are also increasingly detected as incidental findings. Dr. Suh-Burgmann wanted to know how many of these masses actually turned out to be cancer—in other words, was surgery really necessary? Furthermore, how long did a mass need to be monitored to exclude malignancy? No prior study had studied these questions in a real-world cohort.

Her study, published in the American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology (December 2014), found that among approximately 1400 women in the study, only 7 had cancer (0.5%). There were 11 borderline tumors which can, in rare cases, progress to cancer. Including borderline tumors, the rate was 1.3%. All malignancies demonstrated growth on ultrasound within 7 months.

The study led to the development of new radiology templates to help clinicians better interpret ultrasound findings, and new practice recommendations for when to choose surgery versus monitoring.