



Colorectal Cancer - Ten Year Study

Colorectal cancer is a major health concern in the United States as well as the world. Six percent of Americans are expected to develop the disease within their lifetime. There are more than one million new cases worldwide. It remains the 2nd leading cause of cancer deaths worldwide with over 500,000.

In 2008, an estimated 158,000 new cases in the U.S. were diagnosed. Approximately 50,000 deaths occurred in the country from this disease in 2008.

The state of Missouri recorded an estimated 3,090 new cases 2008 and an estimated 1,100 deaths during that year from colorectal cancer.

It remains one of the most expensive cancers to treat since multiple therapies are required for cure; surgery, chemotherapy and often radiation therapy.

The charts and graphs that accompany this article, represent pertinent statistics concerning patients diagnosed and treated at Heartland Regional Medical Center (HRMC) over a 10 – year period. Of note, the trend over the last 10 years at HRMC is trending downward. Examples: 86 cases in 1999, 78 in 2003 and 66 in 2008. The overall incidence in the State of Missouri over this same time period is also trending downward as shown in Table 1.

Patient ages at diagnosis at HRMC for both colon and rectum are presented in Table 2. The patients are separated at 5 year intervals to observe any changes over this 10 year period. The incidence in colon and rectal cancer diagnosed at HRMC remains nearly equally divided between male and female from 1999 through 2008 (Figure 1). This mirrors national trends with neither sex noting an increase incidence.

Table 3 shows the survival by stage for colon and rectal cancer at HRMC diagnosed during the period 1999 through 2008 compared to the same survival data nationally. Again, these numbers compare quite favorably for HRMC.

The number of total cases may be greater since very early stage cancers may be detected by the GI endoscopist or Surgeon with the pathology being sent to another facility for reporting. These early stage patients therefore may not enter into the tumor registry data for HRMC.

Approximately 50% of people in Western countries have adenomas by age 65. The data also reveal that endoscopic polypectomy reduces cancer risk by 80 – 90%. Colorectal cancer has a 95% survival rate when detected early and multiple methods are applicable for screening large populations.

HRMC cancer program has offered a free, annual fecal occult blood test (FOBT) screening for the region since 1987. The number of gastroenterologists in the community offering colonoscopy screening has risen from one in the early 1980's to approximately six. Although it is difficult to obtain the numbers of annual screening colonoscopies performed or colonoscopies performed to evaluate a positive FOBT, it is thought that this is partly responsible for the decline of total colorectal cancer cases over this most recent 10 years. When comparing data for the last ten years, the reduction rate in colon cancers for HRMC is 16% versus the state of Missouri figure of 4.1%.

In an effort to improve the effectiveness of the annual FOBT screening as well as further inform the community about the effectiveness of early detection, the Cancer Program is organizing an improved colorectal screening campaign. This effort is centered around bringing a wide variety of services together and coordinating their existing efforts. A renewed advertising campaign timed around the national colorectal cancer awareness month of March, a speakers series from community physicians educating the public about screening techniques, value of screening and treatment advances, as well as other local initiatives are being coordinated to expand the message of “early detection saves lives”.

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Table 1.

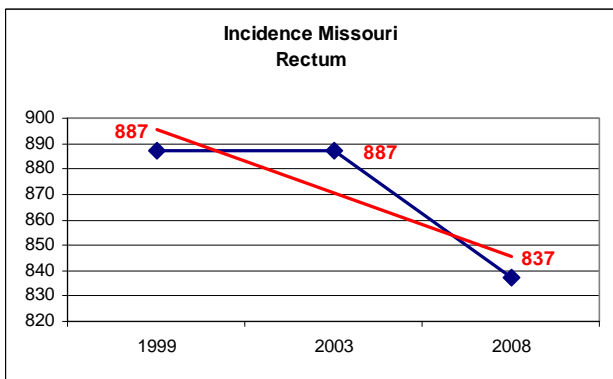
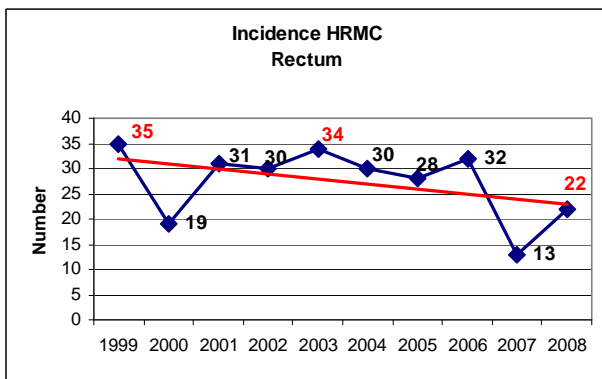
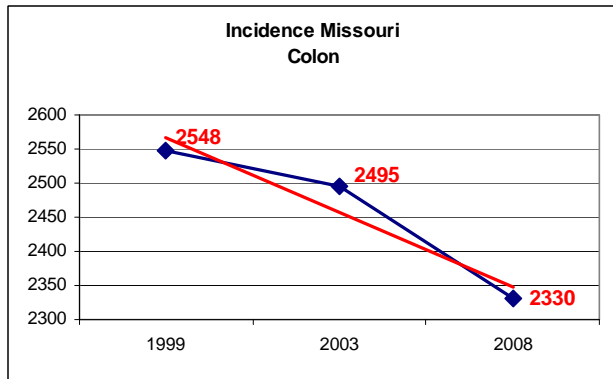
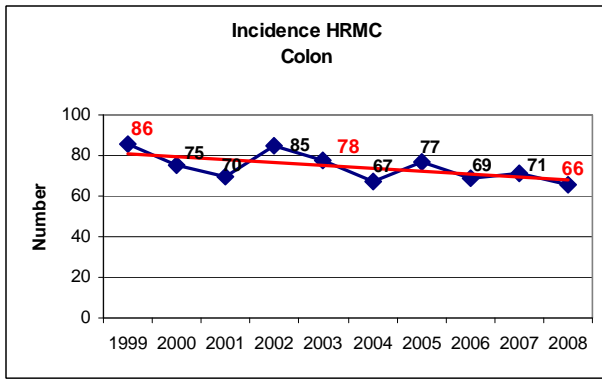


Table 2.

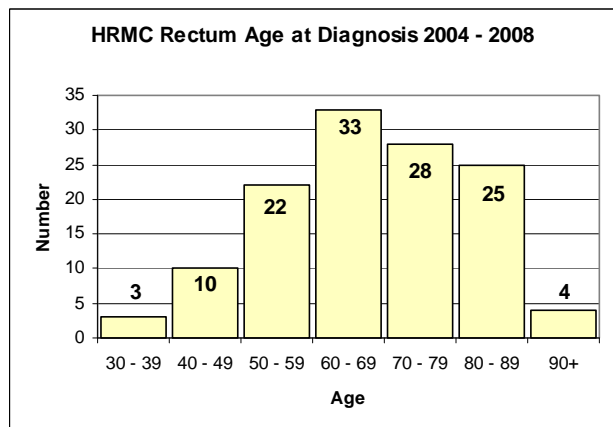
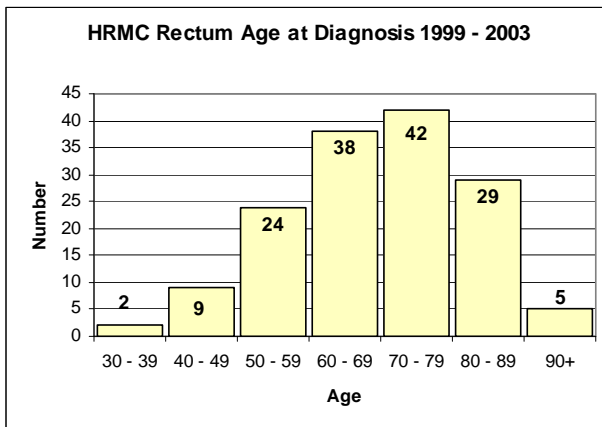
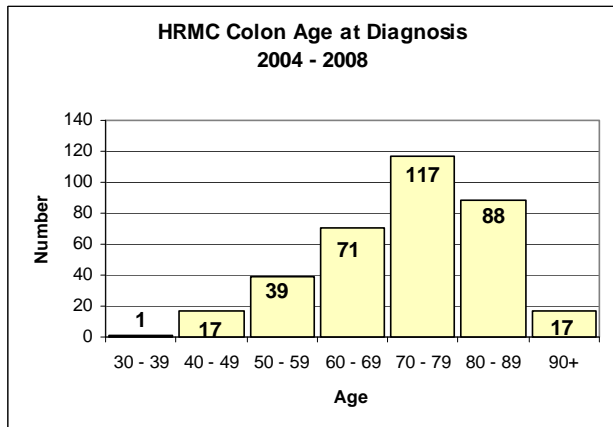
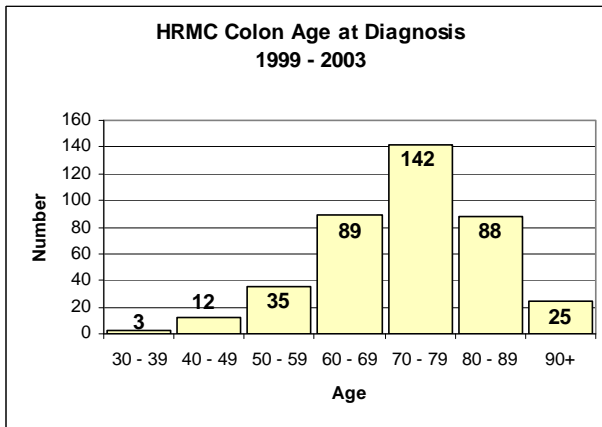


Figure 1

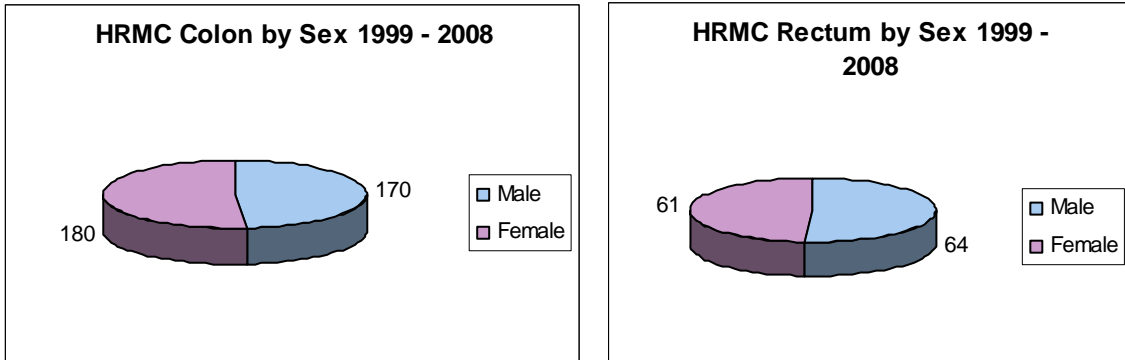


Table 3

