

IUD saving fertility for women with cancer

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A common intrauterine device (IUD) could help preserve fertility and reduce the need for hysterectomies for women suffering endometrial cancer, according to University of Queensland research.

UQ's Professor Andreas Obermair, from the Queensland Centre for Gynecological Cancer Research, said his team had just completed the feMMe study—a phase II randomized trial with 165 [endometrial cancer](#) patients from Australia and New Zealand.

"The feMMe study treated [women](#) with endometrial [cancer](#) less-invasively through the use of a common IUD, reducing the need for surgery and preserving a women's fertility," Professor Obermair said.

"The [standard treatment](#) for early-stage endometrial cancer is a total hysterectomy, and while surgery is safe and effective for most patients, there are two groups of women who are poorly served with that strategy.

"Those two groups are [young women](#) who haven't completed a family and want to retain their fertility, and women who are quite obese and have a lot of medical illnesses."

Professor Obermair said endometrial cancer was the most common gynecological cancer in Australia, with approximately 3200 women diagnosed each year, with cases growing as the levels of obesity and aging increase in Australia.

The results of the feMMe study have provided a boost for young and overweight women who may be eligible for a non-surgical treatment option.

Professor Obermair said 82 percent of women with a precursor to endometrial cancer called 'endometrial hyperplasia with atypia' and 52 percent of women with endometrial cancer responded to the new non-invasive treatment.

"Importantly, the trial also showed that with weight loss, the new treatment was more successful with a 67 percent response rate, and side

effects were few and far between," he said.

"The results benefit women who have an unreasonably high risk of complications from endometrial cancer surgery and [younger women](#) diagnosed with early stage cancer who wish to retain fertility to complete their families."

While the results of the trial are positive, Professor Obermair said there was more work to be done.

"We need to focus further research efforts to find parameters that predict response or non-response to that non-invasive treatment," he said.

The details and results of the feMMe trial were published in *Gynaecologic Oncology*.

More information: Monika Janda et al. Complete pathological response following levonorgestrel intrauterine device in clinically stage 1 endometrial adenocarcinoma: Results of a randomized clinical trial, *Gynecologic Oncology* (2021). [DOI: 10.1016/j.ygyno.2021.01.029](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ygyno.2021.01.029)

Provided by University of Queensland

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