Fatigue in Women Receiving Intraperitoneal Chemotherapy for Ovarian Cancer
A Review of Contributing Factors

Women diagnosed with stage III or IV ovarian cancer typically are treated with surgery followed by chemotherapy. Intraperitoneal (IP) chemotherapy, the direct administration of chemotherapy into the IP cavity, has been explored as a viable treatment option for some women with advanced ovarian cancer. Fatigue may occur as a result of the disease process, treatment, or a wide variety of physical, psychological, or situational factors. Fatigue is one of the most common and distressing side effects associated with chemotherapy and it may be intensified in women receiving IP chemotherapy. The purpose of this article is to examine fatigue in women receiving IP chemotherapy for advanced ovarian cancer and to examine what aspects of IP chemotherapy may contribute to fatigue development. Factors reviewed include surgery for debulking the tumor and placement of the IP catheter, administration of IV chemotherapy in addition to IP chemotherapy, pain, anemia, sleep disturbances, gastrointestinal disturbances, and emotional distress. Oncology nurses who are knowledgeable about the factors that contribute to fatigue in women receiving IP chemotherapy will be better prepared to conduct a comprehensive assessment and develop effective treatment strategies.