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WVU Cancer Institute at Berkeley Medical Center joins national study for colorectal cancer screenings

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From left are Vishal Gupta, MD, Gastroenterology, Joseph An, DO, Medical Oncology, WVU Cancer Institute, Valli White, RN, clinical research coordinator.

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MARTINSBURG — The WVU Cancer Institute Dorothy A. McCormack Center at the WVU Medicine Berkeley Medical Center is participating in a national colorectal cancer prevention study aimed at determining the most effective follow-up care for patients with low-risk colon polyps. WVU Medicine providers Joseph An, DO, Medical Oncology, WVU Cancer Institute, and Vishal Gupta, MD, Gastroenterology at WVU Medicine, are taking part in the clinical trial known as Five- or Ten-Year Colonoscopy for Non-Advanced Adenomatous Polyps (FORTE).

The FORTE study seeks to answer an important clinical question: Should patients who have had one or two small, benign polyps removed during a colonoscopy receive their next screening at 10 years, or should they undergo repeat colonoscopies at both five and 10 years? Currently, the optimal timing for repeating a colonoscopy in these low-risk patients remains uncertain.

According to the study, colorectal cancer is the fourth most diagnosed cancer and the second leading cause of cancer-related death among men and women in the United States. Early detection and appropriate surveillance are critical in preventing disease progression, making studies such as FORTE essential to improving patient outcomes, and informing national screening guidelines.

Dr. An emphasized how the study supports patient-centered care by potentially reducing unnecessary procedures.

“Our goal is to provide the highest level of care while also being mindful of what patients truly need,” Dr. An said. “For individuals at low risk, more frequent colonoscopies may not always provide additional benefits. Studies like FORTE help us determine the safest and most effective approach, while potentially reducing unnecessary, frequent surveillance colonoscopies for low-risk patients.”

By participating in the FORTE study, the WVU Cancer Institute at Berkeley Medical Center joins a network of leading healthcare institutions working to refine colorectal cancer surveillance strategies. Findings from the study could influence future screening recommendations and improve patient experience without compromising safety.

“Clinical studies are essential to improving how we prevent, detect and treat cancer,” said Dr. Gupta. “WVU Medicine is dedicated to being at the forefront of clinical research so we can help advance best practices not only for our patients, but for communities nationwide. Participating in a national study like FORTE reinforces our commitment to evidence-based medicine and continuous improvement.”

For more information about colorectal cancer screenings patients are encouraged to speak with their healthcare provider or visit our website.