

## Journal Watch – Artificial Nutrition – January 2018

**Article:**

The effect of total parenteral nutrition on the survival of terminally ill ovarian cancer patients

Brard *et al.*

Gynecologic Oncology 2006;103(1):176

Article link: DOI: [10.1016/j.ygyno.2006.02.013](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ygyno.2006.02.013)

**Review:**

**Strengths:**

1. Novel, informative study on TPN in ovarian cancer patients, clinically relevant topic
2. Even 12 years later, remains one of the few studies on palliative treatments in gynecologic cancer patients
3. Documented complication rates from TNP were low (1 case of line sepsis)

**Weaknesses:**

1. Retrospective design (selection bias, confounding)
2. Higher proportion of chemo in TPN group
3. No mention of medical management techniques or standardization of protocol for conservative management of malignant bowel obstruction
4. No evaluation of quality of life, ethnic, or religious backgrounds, which may affect patients' decision to pursue chemotherapy or TPN

**Relevance to Palliative Care:**

1. Intestinal obstruction is the most frequent cause of death in ovarian cancer
2. TPN in the palliative care setting continues to be a controversial issue:
  - Some argue it may prolong the process of dying without improving quality of life, especially in those with a poor performance status
  - It may be beneficial in those with a good performance status, who are responding to palliative therapies and with good quality of life, but in whom the GI tract is non-functional
3. Management should be individualized taking into account the overall quality of life when making a decision for TPN at the end of life.