

**Cancer from page 7**

over the age of 55 years.

- The median age of people in Andover is 48 years, which could be a contributing factor to the number of cancer cases.

- The total number of invasive cancer cases in Andover from 2005 to 2011 is 96, compared to 52,474 statewide during the same period.

- A suspected cancer cluster is more likely to be a true cluster if it involves: a large number of similar types of cancer, a rare type of cancer, or an increased number of cases of a certain type of cancer in an age group not usually affected by that type of cancer.

The results of the analysis for Andover showed that the various cancer rates are within the range of what is expected in comparable populations in New Hampshire. (The analysis at [AndoverBeacon.com/Cancer-Report](http://AndoverBeacon.com/Cancer-Report) breaks down these rates by type of cancer.) These results are reassuring, as they suggest that the most likely explanation for these observations is random chance as opposed to environmental factors.

But this is not to suggest that it is not possible to reduce the risk of cancer. On the contrary, most cancer incidences can be related to our behavior, such as smoking, excessive sun exposure, heart

disease, and diabetes.

New Hampshire has very good reporting and collection of data on cancer cases. Therefore, there is a high level of confidence in the data that exists.

However, the presenters explained that due to the small size of New Hampshire towns, it is very difficult to obtain strong statistical results in a small geographic area within a town, or for a specific type of cancer when the number of cases is small.

Also, the information that they are able to collect from the cancer registry and from hospitals is very limited in scope. For example, they have no way of knowing how long a person has lived in a community that they are studying, or what each person's workplace environment is like.

A long question and answer session followed, with some residents still concerned about the incidence of cancer and the obvious limitations of a statistical analysis-type study.

Cindy Benson offer a presentation on breast cancer with a breast cancer surgeon from Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center and information on treatment options and general education. Time and place will be announced.

The full Powerpoint presentation of the study results is available at [AndoverBeacon.com/Cancer-Slides](http://AndoverBeacon.com/Cancer-Slides).

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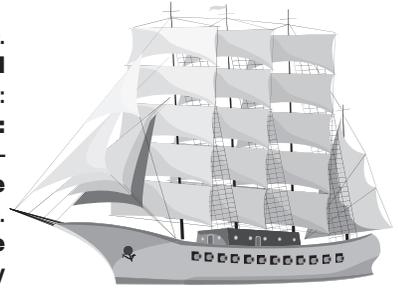


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