# Digoxin Appears to Prevent Prostate Cancer

BY BRUCE JANCIN

DENVER — Men on digoxin were roughly one-quarter less likely to be diagnosed with prostate cancer than were digoxin nonusers, according to findings from the Health Professionals Follow-Up Study.

The longer the duration of digoxin use, the lower the risk of prostate cancer. Indeed, men on digoxin for at least 10 years had a 42% relative risk reduction for the malignancy compared with never-users, Elizabeth A. Platz, Sc.D., said at the annual meeting of the American Association for Cancer Research.

The Health Professionals Follow-Up Study is a very large, prospective, Harvard University–based cohort investigation. Dr. Platz reported on 4,511 cases of prostate cancer that occurred among 47,759 participating men aged 40-75 years during 745,041 person-years of follow-up.

Two percent of the participants were on digoxin at baseline. Their risk of developing prostate cancer during the follow-up period was 26% lower than in digoxin nonusers, even after adjusting for numerous potential confounders, including dietary differences and the use of other medications, among which were statins and aspirin, explained Dr. Platz, a cancer epidemiologist at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore.

The association between digoxin use and reduced risk of developing prostate cancer was equally robust among those prescribed the drug for heart failure and those on digoxin for arrhythmias, she added.

The study was funded by the National Cancer Institute and the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. ■