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FROM PAP TO PAPILLOMA TO PD-1: A CENTURY OF EVOLUTION OF CERVICAL CANCER CARE

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Cervical cancer diagnosis and treatment has undergone a remarkable transformation over the last century. These advances have transformed cancer care worldwide. This presentation explores the trajectory of these developments, and highlights the individuals, their work, and milestones responsible for the improved survival and patient outcomes for cervical cancer patients.

Dr. Papanicolaou first presented his pivotal work on cervical cancer screening at the 1928 Race Betterment Conference, a symposium deeply influenced by eugenics ideology. The cultural context of this conference is noteworthy as it highlights the intersection of medical science and societal viewports on race and health. This revolutionary work, was further advanced by Dr. zur Hausen, whose paradigm shifting work identified the relationship between human papillomavirus (HPV) and cervical cancer, paving the way for HPV vaccine development. More recently PD-1 inhibition has shown to be effective in improved outcomes for those with cervical cancer, signifying the latest innovation in therapeutic options for patients with cervical cancer, who previously had few, by harnessing the power of the immune system. This abstract, while a deviation from the traditional scientific presentation, offers a stimulating historical narrative, highlighting the evolution of cervical cancer care, within the medical, societal, cultural, and ethical framework that impacts medical breakthroughs, and allows for reflection on lessons learned from our past, as we advocate for equitable access to cancer prevention and treatment worldwide.