About ovarian cancer

- In 2009, 1,338 cases of ovarian cancer were diagnosed, making it the second most common gynaecological cancer in Australia.²
- Ovarian cancer was the most common cause of death from gynaecological cancer in Australia in 2010, with 912 deaths.²
- About two-thirds of women with ovarian cancer are diagnosed at an advanced stage of disease.
- While the survival rate for ovarian cancer has improved significantly in recent years, it still remains low in comparison with other gynaecological cancers. Only 43 out of 100 women with ovarian cancer survive five years beyond their diagnosis.³
Cancer Australia gynaecological cancer initiatives

In 2013, Cancer Australia will continue to work to improve cancer control in gynaecological cancer through:

- **Leadership in health service delivery and clinical best practice**
- **Funding priority research and promoting national data reporting**
- **Improving community access to cancer information**

Achievements

**Leadership in health service delivery and clinical best practice**

- **Release** of the *Clinical Practice Guidelines for the Treatment and Management of Endometrial Cancer* commissioned by Cancer Australia and developed in collaboration with Cancer Council Australia.

- **Conducting** evidence reviews about:
  - Lynch Syndrome (HNPCC) and endometrial cancer
  - the treatment of women with stage 1B2 cervical cancer; and
  - the role of sentinel node biopsy in early stage cancer of the vulva, to inform development of guideline recommendations.

- Development of revised best-practice guidelines about the use of chemotherapy for first-line treatment of women with epithelial ovarian cancer, based on a systematic review of the evidence.

- **Hosting a Forum** with key stakeholders from across Australia, to support uptake of evidence-based ovarian cancer chemotherapy recommendations, informed by earlier work conducted in collaboration with the Queensland Institute of Medical Research (QIMR).

Gynaecological cancers: did you know?

In 2008, 4,534 women were diagnosed with a gynaecological cancer in Australia; an average of 12 women per day.

In 2007, 1,502 women died from a gynaecological cancer in Australia; an average of 4 deaths per day.

Between 1982 and 2007 the number of deaths for all gynaecological cancers combined increased by 22% but the mortality rate,* decreased steadily by 34%.

Between 1982-1987 and 2006-2010, the number of women surviving for five years after their diagnosis increased significantly from 60 to 67%.

In 2008, 4,534 women were diagnosed with a gynaecological cancer in Australia; an average of 12 women per day.

In 2007, 1,502 women died from a gynaecological cancer in Australia; an average of 4 deaths per day.

Between 1982 and 2007 the number of deaths for all gynaecological cancers combined increased by 22% but the mortality rate,* decreased steadily by 34%.

Between 1982-1987 and 2006-2010, the number of women surviving for five years after their diagnosis increased significantly from 60 to 67%.

* The mortality rate is the number of deaths per 100,000 population.
Implementation of an interactive training module for health professionals to address the psychosexual care of women affected by gynaecological cancers, including ovarian cancer. This project was undertaken by the Queensland University of Technology, with health professionals in each state and territory undertaking training to support the psycho-sexual care of women with gynaecological cancers.

Achievements

Promoting national data reporting

Release of the first national statistical report on gynaecological cancers, Gynaecological cancers in Australia: an overview developed in collaboration with the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), covering ovarian, cervical, uterine, vaginal and vulval cancers.

Release of accompanying on-line resources, Report to the nation - gynaecological cancers and individual Reports for cervical, ovarian, uterine, vaginal and vulval cancer to provide a user-friendly overview of key statistics for consumers and media.

Development and piloting of a Gynaecological Cancer Data Set Specification (DSS), which has been provided to the METeOR unit of AIHW for approval before submission to the National Health Information Standards and Statistics Committee (NHISSC).

Funding priority research

Awarding of over $8 million to support research in gynaecological cancers (2007-2011), through Cancer Australia’s Priority-driven Collaborative Cancer Research Scheme (PdCCRS), a national project grants scheme that brings together Government and non-Government funders in a national, coordinated funded process.

Funding provided to Australia’s 13 National Cooperative Cancer Clinical Trials Groups, to build capacity to conduct cancer clinical trials in Australia. Between 2008 and June 2013, over $2.5 million was provided to the Australian New Zealand Gynaecological Oncology Group (ANZGOG).

Achievements

Improving community access to cancer information

Release of evidence-based information for consumers to address the issues of intimacy and sexuality following treatment for women with a diagnosis of gynaecological cancer. The resource, available online and in hard copy, builds on Cancer Australia’s training module developed for health professionals.

Revision of evidence-based consumer information about gynaecological cancers, to ensure consumers can continue to access up-to-date information.

Commissioning a systematic review of evidence about risk factors for ovarian cancer including: hormonal and reproductive factors, medical interventions and lifestyle and diet, to inform and update key messages for consumers.

Raising awareness of gynaecological cancers including activities in Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month and on Teal Ribbon Day to promote evidence-based messages about ovarian cancer.

References


Footnotes

* Mortality rates shown in this document are “age-standardised” which means that the age distribution of the population is also considered. Therefore, any differences we see in these rates are not due to differences in the age distributions of populations being compared.
Cancer Australia works to reduce the impact of cancer and improve the wellbeing of people affected by cancer in Australia.