About ovarian cancer

In 2015, it is estimated that 1,460 cases of ovarian cancer will be diagnosed, making it the second most common gynaecological cancer in Australia.\(^2\)

It is estimated that ovarian cancer will be the most common cause of death from gynaecological cancer in Australia during 2015, with approximately 1,020 deaths predicted.\(^2\)

About two-thirds of women with ovarian cancer are diagnosed at an advanced stage of disease.\(^3\)

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.\(^2\)
Development of a Framework for Gynaecological Cancer Control to guide policy and service delivery directions in national gynaecological cancer control over the next five years.

Symptoms of ovarian cancer

Most women with ovarian cancer

Symptoms of ovarian cancer are often vague, generalised and non-gynaecological.

- Abdominal bloating/feeling full
- Unexplained weight loss
- Constipation, heartburn
- Back pain
- Frequent urination
- Fatigue
- Abdominal/pelvic pain

If symptoms persist for more than one month consider ovarian cancer and undertake further assessment.

CT and CA125.

Refer for:

- Abdominal ultrasound
- Transvaginal ultrasound

If findings on clinical examination are suspicious:

- Ultrasound
- Serum CA125

Features that suggest malignancy include:

- Duration, actions that relieve symptoms.
- Septation (persistent/recurring), when first noticed,
- Papillary projections
- Type of symptom, site, nature of symptoms

A woman with a suspicious or persistent complex adnexal mass needs surgical exploration.

Survival for women with ovarian cancer has been shown to be improved when all or most of the tumour is removed at surgery.

Optimal surgical cytoreduction and appropriate staging is more frequently achieved by a gynaecological oncologist.

Visit the Australian Society of Gynaecologic Oncologists website at www.asgo.net.au

Release of clinical guidance for health professionals about sentinel node biopsy in early-stage cancer of the vulva.

Conduct of a systematic review of research evidence regarding stage 1B2 cervical cancer.

Develop and promote 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.

Release of updated resources for GPs to assist the appropriate referral of women with suspected ovarian cancer.

Resources for GPs to assist the appropriate referral of women with suspected ovarian cancer.

Professor David Bowtell and Ms Kath Mazzella OAM, the 2014 recipients of the Jeannie Ferris Cancer Australia Australia Recognition Award.

Cancer Australia gynaecological cancer initiatives

Shape national cancer control in Australia

Improve cancer outcomes
Inform effective and sustainable cancer care

Awarding research grants in gynaecological cancers, 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 nationally coordinated process. Through this scheme over $12 million has been provided to gynaecological cancer grants in the period 2007-2014, 17 of which were for ovarian cancer research projects.

Development of the Gynaecological Cancer Data Set Specification to support standardised data collection for gynaecological cancers.

Strengthen capability for national cancer control

Supporting the Jeannie Ferris Cancer Australia Recognition Award, which recognises outstanding contributions to improving outcomes for women with gynaecological cancers and honours the late Senator Jeannie Ferris. The successful 2014 award recipients were Ms Kath Mazzella OAM in the Community Member category and Professor David Bowtell in the Health Professional/Researcher category.

Publication of evidence-based consumer information and statistics about gynaecological cancers in 10 different languages, to ensure consumers can continue to access up-to-date information.

Improving community access to cancer information to promote awareness of gynaecological and breast cancer in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

Building capacity to conduct cancer clinical trials in Australia. Between July 2013 and June 2016, Cancer Australia will provide $1.4 million to the Australia New Zealand Gynaecological Oncology Group (ANZGOG) to develop industry-independent cancer clinical trials in gynaecological cancers.

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

Cancer Australia works to reduce the impact of cancer and improve the wellbeing of people affected by cancer in Australia.