



CANCER AUSTRALIA

Gynaecological Cancers

Definition

- Gynaecological cancers are cancers of the female reproductive system.
- Gynaecological cancers include cancers of the vulva, vagina, cervix, uterus, ovary and placenta.

Incidence and mortality

- In 2006, 4,243 new cases of gynaecological cancers were reported in Australia. This figure accounted for 9.3 per cent of all female cancers.
- In 2006, the most common gynaecological cancers were cancers of the:
 - Uterus: 1,772 new cases (42 per cent of all female gynaecological cancer cases)
 - Ovary: 1,226 new cases (29 per cent of all female gynaecological cancer cases)
 - Cervix: 715 new cases (17 per cent of all female gynaecological cancer cases)
- The lifetime risk of a female developing these cancers before the age of 75 is 1 in 73 (uterus), 1 in 116 (ovary), 1 in 201 (cervix) .
- In 2007, gynaecological cancers were responsible for 1,502 female deaths in Australia, accounting for 8.7 per cent of all female cancer deaths.
- In 2007, the most common cause of death from a gynaecological cancer were cancers of the:
 - Ovary: 848 deaths (4.9 per cent of all female cancer deaths). This equates to 56.5 per cent of all gynaecological cancer deaths.
 - Uterus (body): 208 deaths (1.2 per cent of all female cancer deaths)
 - Cervix: 208 deaths (1.2 per cent of all female cancer deaths)

Trends

- In general over the last 20 years, the incidence of gynaecological cancers has increased but mortality rates of gynaecological cancers have decreased
- Cancer of the cervix has decreased in both incidence and mortality rates. In particular, incidence and mortality rates of the cervix has decreased dramatically over the last 20 years (51 per cent and 63 per cent respectively)
- Although the incidence of cancer of the uterus has increased (19 per cent), mortality rates have been declining (38 per cent).
- Cancer of the ovary is uncommon before the age of 20, but increases with age.
- Cancer of the uterus is rare before the age of 20, however the rates increase dramatically

between 45 and 55 years of age.

- The incidence of cancer of the cervix increases after the age of 20, however does not have the same close association with age as many other cancers.

Relative survival

- Relative survival for gynaecological cancers varies depending on the type.
- The percentage of females that will be alive 5 years after their diagnosis are:
 - Cancer of the uterus: 81.4 per cent
 - Cancer of the cervix: 74.6 per cent
 - Cancer of the ovary: 40 per cent

Risk factors

- A range of risk factors are associated with gynaecological cancers. The strength of the risk factors is dependent on the type of gynaecological cancer.
- Generally, a family history of cancer and lifestyle factors increases the risk of developing a gynaecological cancer.
- Other risk factors include:
 - Uterine cancer – age, history of endometrial hyperplasia, history of poly cystic ovary syndrome associated with anovulation, reproductive history, exposure to unopposed oestrogen, non-conventional hormone replacement therapy, obesity (often with diabetes and hypertension), tamoxifen.
 - Cervical cancer – HPV infection, smoking, HIV infection, weight/diet, oral contraceptive pill and exposure to diethylstilboestrol in the womb.
 - Ovarian cancer – age, diet/weight, fertility drugs, hormone replacement therapy, personal history of breast cancer.
 - Vulval cancer – age, HPV infection, smoking, HIV infection.
 - Vaginal cancer – age, exposure to diethylstilboestrol in the womb, HPV infection, smoking, HIV infection.

Sources: This factsheet draws on data published by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, including in:

- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2010. Australia's Health 2010. Australia's health series no. 12. Cat. no. AUS 122. Canberra: AIHW.
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Cancer Australia & Australasian Association of Cancer Registries 2008. Cancer survival and prevalence in Australia: cancers diagnosed from 1982 to 2004. Cancer series no. 42 Cat. no. CAN 38. Canberra: AIHW.
- www.aihw.gov.au/cancer/data/acim_books (viewed 28/9/2010) - 2006 incidence and 2007 mortality data.

The figures quoted relate to cancers C51-C58 as classified under the International Classification of Diseases (ICD – 10).

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