



OVARIAN CANCER : SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

NEWS : Understanding ovarian cancer: its causes, symptoms, and screening methods

WHAT'S IN THE NEWS ?

Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month - September

Ovarian Cancer:

- **Definition:** Cancer that begins in the ovaries, which produce eggs in females. It involves rapid cell growth that can invade and destroy healthy tissue.

Subtypes:

- **Type I Tumours:** Less common, typically diagnosed early, better prognosis.
- **Type II Tumours:** More common, aggressive, usually diagnosed at an advanced stage, and cause most deaths.

Symptoms:

- **Vague Symptoms:** Bloating, pelvic/abdominal pain, loss of appetite, feeling full quickly, frequent urination.
- **Other Signs:** Indigestion, constipation, back pain, persistent fatigue, weight loss.
- **"Silent Killer":** Symptoms are often mistaken for common ailments, leading to late diagnosis and poor prognosis.

Causes:

- **Genetic Factors:**
 - Most heritable cancer.
 - 65-85% of hereditary cases involve BRCA1 or BRCA2 mutations.
 - BRCA1 mutation increases risk up to 50%, BRCA2 mutation around 15%.
- **Endometriosis:** Increases risk of certain ovarian cancers.
- **Lifestyle Factors:**
 - Talcum powder (historically linked to asbestos, a carcinogen).
 - Chemical hair products (may release formaldehyde, a carcinogen).
 - Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) linked to higher risk.

Screening:

- **No Effective Screening Tests:** CA125 blood test is used for monitoring but is less effective for screening asymptomatic women due to false positives.
- **Importance of Awareness:** Understanding risk factors and symptoms is crucial due to the lack of reliable screening tools.



Genetic Counselling:

- **Purpose:** Helps individuals understand the medical, psychological, and familial implications of genetic contributions to ovarian cancer.
- **Use:** Valuable for women with a family history of ovarian cancer to identify risk and guide preventive measures.

Indian Scenario:

- **Prevalence:** Ovarian cancer is among the top three cancers in India, contributing to 6% of all women's cancers.
- **Statistics (2022):** 47,333 new cases and 32,978 deaths.

Is ovarian cancer a silent killer?

• Individuals may not show specific symptoms in the early stages due to similarities with other common conditions

40+
years old

What can increase the risk?

1. Middle-aged (above 40 years old)
2. Evidence in your family history
3. Obesity
4. Smoking
5. Early menarche or late menopause

Symptoms

1. Vaginal bleeding
2. Pelvic or stomach pain
3. Abdominal bloating
4. Frequent urination
5. Loss of appetite
6. Abnormal vaginal discharge

How to potentially reduce the risk?

1. Usage of combined contraceptive pills
2. Having children
3. Breastfeeding
4. Hysterectomy

Source : https://epaper.thehindu.com/ccidistws/th/th_delhi/issues/98886/OPS/GHNDAFSK4.1+G5QDAI2L2.1.html