



## MEDIA RELEASE

# Gynaecological cancers still a major cause of disease, but survival improving for some types

On average, 12 females are diagnosed with a gynaecological cancer each day in Australia, but survival prospects are improving, according to a report released today by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) and Cancer Australia.

*Gynaecological cancers in Australia: an overview*, provides national statistics about gynaecological cancers as a group for the first time.

The report shows uterine cancer was the most commonly diagnosed gynaecological cancer in 2008 (2,016 cases), followed by ovarian cancer (1,272) and cervical cancer (778).

A total of 4,534 new gynaecological cancers were diagnosed in Australia in 2008, accounting for over 9% of all new cancers in females,' said AIHW spokesperson Anne Bech.

'While the number of new cases of all gynaecological cancers increased between 1982 and 2008, the overall incidence rate fell by 12%,' Ms Bech said.

The report shows that the five-year relative survival for ovarian, uterine and cervical cancers has improved over time and that Australian women diagnosed with these cancers have better survival prospects than women in many other countries.

The five year relative survival varied for the individual cancer types – 82% for uterine cancer, 72% for cervical cancer and 43% for ovarian cancer.

'While the survival rate for ovarian cancer has improved significantly in recent years, it still remains low in comparison with other gynaecological cancers,' said Cancer Australia CEO Dr Helen Zorbas.

'The reasons for this lower survival outcome include the relatively high proportion of ovarian cancers diagnosed at an advanced stage due to the non-specific nature of symptoms and the lack of an effective screening test.

'Although survival rates are improving, 4 women still die each day from gynaecological cancer in Australia.'

The report shows that ovarian cancer was the most common cause of gynaecological cancer deaths in 2007 (848 deaths), followed by uterine cancer (338 deaths) and cervical cancer (208 deaths).

'Gynaecological cancers accounted for 9% of all cancer deaths in women in 2007,' AIHW spokesperson Anne Bech said.

The AIHW is a major national agency set up by the Australian Government to provide reliable, regular and relevant information and statistics on Australia's health and welfare.

Cancer Australia provides national leadership in cancer control to improve outcomes for those affected by cancer and their families and carers.

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