

Study challenges anecdotal evidence of diagnostic delay in ovarian cancer

September 20 2010

Most women with ovarian cancer in Australia are investigated and diagnosed promptly, despite anecdotal suggestions to the contrary, according to research published in the *Medical Journal of Australia*.

Study author Dr. Susan Jordan, from the UQ School of Population Health, said delays in clinical diagnosis were more common among [women](#) with lower incomes, those living in remote areas, and those with abdominal or bowel symptoms.

Dr. Jordan said 85 percent of women visited three or fewer doctors before their cancer was diagnosed, 66 per cent of cancers were diagnosed within one month of the initial presentation, and 80 per cent were diagnosed within three months.

“Anecdotally, there is a perception that the journey from first presentation to diagnosis is often long and circuitous for women with ovarian cancer,” Dr. Jordan said.

“To our knowledge, this is the first study to describe in detail the diagnostic pathways experienced by women with ovarian cancer in Australia.

“Our study provides reassurance that, despite anecdotal evidence to the contrary, most women with ovarian cancer in Australia are diagnosed promptly once they present to a medical practitioner.”

Scientists from the Queensland Institute of Medical Research, UQ and National Breast and [Ovarian Cancer](#) Centre studied the experiences of 1,463 women across Australia.

The women completed a telephone interview about the events that led to the diagnosis of their cancer.

Of the 1,318 women whose cancer was not diagnosed incidentally, about 42 per cent were either given a diagnosis or referred to a [gynaecologist](#), gynaecological oncologist or oncologist as a result of their first medical consultation.

This figure increased to 61 per cent when repeat visits to the same doctor were included.

However, the study found that for 12 per cent of the women the diagnostic process took longer than six months.

“Further studies addressing these factors, especially lack of access to care, are warranted,” she said.

Provided by University of Queensland

Citation: Study challenges anecdotal evidence of diagnostic delay in ovarian cancer (2010, September 20) retrieved 20 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2010-09-anecdotal-evidence-diagnostic-ovarian-cancer.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.