

Ovarian cancer's specific scent detected by dogs

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Ground-breaking research in the June issue of *Integrative Cancer Therapies* published by SAGE explored whether ovarian cancer has a scent different from other cancers and whether working dogs could be taught to distinguish it in its different stages.

Ovarian cancer has a high mortality rate, primarily due to late diagnosis. Recent studies have shown that dogs have successfully detected cancer through scent, however, it's not clear whether they're responding to the cancer itself or odors associated with cancer.

The researchers, led by György Horvath MD, PhD, from the University Hospital in Göteborg, Sweden, along with colleagues at Working Dog Clubs in Sweden and Hungary, trained dogs to distinguish different types and grades of ovarian cancer, including borderline tumors. They found that the odor of ovarian cancer does seem to differ from those of other gynecological malignancies, such as cervical, or endometrial cancers, suggesting that a particular, distinguishable scent is associated with ovarian cancer. They additionally found that early-stage and low grade ovarian cancers emit the same scent as advanced tumors.

"Our study strongly suggests that the most common ovarian carcinomas are characterized by a single specific odor detectable by trained dogs," write the authors in the article. "And while we do not believe that dogs should be used in clinical practice, because they may be influenced during their work, leading to changes in the accuracy rates, still, under controlled circumstances, they may be used in experiments to further

explore this very interesting new property of malignancies."

Adds Keith I. Block, MD, editor-in-chief of Integrative Cancer Therapies, "I believe there is great value in this study, which adds to the growing body of research suggesting the diagnostic skills of these specially trained dogs. Their ability to detect specific odors associated with chemicals related to malignancy should eventually lead to effective methods and tools for very early detection, and thus a greater proportion of cancer cures!"

Source: SAGE Publications

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