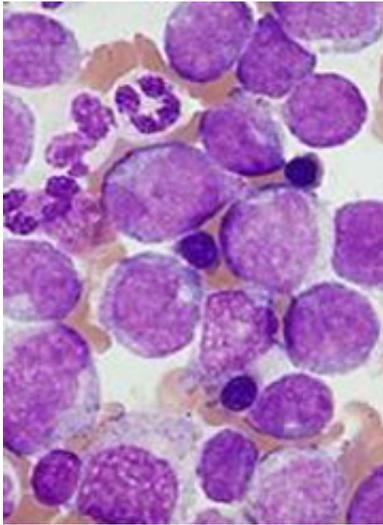


# Screening for ovarian cancer may save lives, new study suggests

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New results from an ovarian cancer screening trial, led by UCL, suggests that screening based on an annual blood test may help reduce the number of deaths caused by the disease by around 20%.

Prof Lesley Fallowfield, Professor of Psychosocial Oncology at BSMS, and Director of Sussex Health Outcomes, Research and Education in Cancer (SHORE-C), was Principal Investigator for the psycho-social arm of the study, which SHORE-C has been conducting over the past 14 years.

Prof Fallowfield said: "The study has shown that early detection of ovarian cancer through [screening](#) can make a significant reduction in the number of women dying from the disease."

Over 200,000 postmenopausal women aged between 50 and 74 years who did not have a strong family history of ovarian cancer were recruited for the study. They were randomly allocated to three groups: multimodal screening or transvaginal ultrasound, who underwent annual screening until December 2011; or to a control group who were not screened. Ovarian cancer was diagnosed in 1,282 women of whom 649 had died of the [disease](#) by the trial end in December 2014.

The multimodal screening [blood test](#), called Risk of Ovarian Cancer Algorithm (ROCA) uses a statistical calculation to interpret changing levels over time of a blood protein called CA125, which is linked to ovarian cancer. This gives a more accurate calculation of a woman's individual risk of having ovarian cancer, compared with an alternative method, which uses a one-off blood test measuring a fixed 'cut-off' point for CA125.

The early results suggested that approximately 15 ovarian cancer deaths could be prevented for every 10,000 women who attend a screening programme that involves annual blood tests for between seven to 11 years.

The research, published in the *Lancet*, also cautions that longer follow up is needed to establish more certain estimates of how many deaths from [ovarian cancer](#) could be prevented by screening. Estimates from the results so far are promising, but the exact figures remain uncertain.

Provided by University of Sussex

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