



**NATIONAL BREAST
CANCER CENTRE**

Incorporating the
Ovarian Cancer Program

Ovarian Cancer Program

Part I – Establishment of the Ovarian Cancer Program

Improving outcomes from ovarian cancer has been recognised as a priority in Australia. Ovarian cancer is the leading cause of death from gynaecological cancers in women in Australia. Each year about 1200 women in Australia are diagnosed with ovarian cancer and about 770 women will die from the disease.

A new initiative

In September 2001, the Commonwealth Government announced the establishment of a new program in ovarian cancer. Funds of \$500,000 over two years were provided to support the program and the National Breast Cancer Centre (Centre) was asked to implement the program.

The Board of the National Breast Cancer Centre has established an Ovarian Cancer Program as part of its work. The Program has an Expert Advisory Group chaired by Dr Gerry Wain as shown in Appendix 1.

Mission of the Ovarian Cancer Program

The mission of the Ovarian Cancer Program is:

To work in partnership with women, health professionals, cancer organisations, researchers and governments to improve the ovarian cancer outcomes for women. The Ovarian Cancer Program will strive to reduce mortality from ovarian cancer and to improve the wellbeing of women who are diagnosed with the disease.

Objectives

In achieving the mission of the Ovarian Cancer Program, the Centre will work towards eight objectives:

1. To identify and provide accurate information about prevention and risk factors for ovarian cancer
2. To provide accurate information and encourage appropriate service provision for women with a strong family risk or known genetic risk of ovarian cancer
3. To improve the detection of ovarian cancer
4. To promote optimal management of all women diagnosed with ovarian cancer
5. To strengthen the provision of psychosocial, physical and practical support to all women diagnosed with ovarian cancer and their families
6. To monitor all aspects of the collection of regular and timely data about ovarian cancer control in Australia
7. To provide all women, health professionals, policy makers and the community with access to current, accurate and appropriate information about all aspects of ovarian cancer
8. To encourage all organisations concerned with ovarian cancer control to work collaboratively to maintain the impetus to improve ovarian cancer outcomes

Philosophy and approach

The Ovarian Cancer Program will be guided by the following values:

Evidence based: All aspects of the work undertaken as part of the Program will be based on the best available evidence.

Informed by consumer perceptions: All aspects of the Program will be informed by the views of consumers.

Partnerships: Wherever possible, the Program will be conducted in partnership with the broad range organisations concerned about ovarian cancer control.

Multidisciplinary: The work of the Program will use a multidisciplinary approach, bringing to the table individuals with different expertise to work together.

Outcomes oriented: All aspects of the Program will be directed towards improving outcomes for women in information, diagnosis, treatment and support.

National: The Program has a national remit to improve ovarian cancer control across Australia.

Priority actions in ovarian cancer control

As a first step in establishing the Ovarian Cancer Program, the document *Priority actions in ovarian cancer control: a framework for a national approach* was developed. The document identifies a series of strategies for improving all aspects of the control of ovarian cancer and was developed following an extensive national consultation.

The Ovarian Cancer Program will base its work on the strategies identified in the *Priority actions in ovarian cancer control* document.

Part 2 – Outcomes of the Ovarian Cancer Program

The National Breast Cancer Centre will be responsible for implementing the Ovarian Cancer Program.

By the end of the two year funding for the Ovarian Cancer Program, it is anticipated that the following outcomes will be achieved from this funding:

- A document *Priority actions for ovarian cancer control: a framework for a national approach* will be published
- A report about ovarian cancer in Australia will be published
- A national clearinghouse for information about ovarian cancer will be established. This will include: proactive and reactive media programs, a web site, information programs for general practitioners and clinicians and a email newsletter
- A review about risk factors and prevention of ovarian cancer will be published and disseminated to women and health professional. This research will be monitored on an ongoing basis.
- The guidelines for health professionals about familial risk of ovarian cancer, *Advice about familial aspects of breast cancer and ovarian cancer: a guide for health professionals* will be revised.

- The trials examining the effectiveness of screening for ovarian cancer will be regularly monitored and the consequences of their findings for policy in Australia evaluated.
- A review of research about the extent to which a range of symptoms are predictive of ovarian cancer and impact of prompt diagnosis of symptomatic women will be published
- A study of symptoms experienced by Australian women with ovarian cancer will be undertaken
- If the review of research indicates that this is appropriate, guidelines for clinicians about the investigation of symptoms that may be ovarian cancer will be developed
- The *Clinical practice guidelines for the management of epithelial ovarian cancer* will be completed and disseminated
- Phase 1 of a program to encourage referral to multidisciplinary clinics will be completed
- Phase 1 of a program to encourage adoption of the *Clinical practice guidelines for the management of epithelial ovarian cancer* will be completed
- A consumer guide based on the *Clinical practice guidelines for the management of epithelial ovarian cancer* will be published.
- A study to investigate the supportive care needs of women with ovarian cancer will be completed

- A one year program of communication skills training for clinicians involved in the management of women with ovarian cancer will be complete
- Promotion of the evidence about supportive care for cancer patients
- A review of information provision about ovarian cancer by the state and territory cancer information services will be complete and the information revised if necessary.
- An analysis of the data available about ovarian cancer will be completed and a strategy developed to standardise data collection
- Analysis of all existing data about the diagnosis, treatment and supportive care of women with ovarian cancer
- A comprehensive monitoring plan for ovarian cancer will be developed
- An information network for Australian ovarian cancer researchers will be established
- A national ovarian cancer conference held for all key stakeholders. Further funding investigated to support holding a second conference.

Appendix A –Ovarian Cancer Expert Advisory Group

Membership

Dr Gerry Wain, (Chair) Gynaecological Oncologist, Westmead Hospital, NSW

Dr Penny Blomfield, Gynaecological Oncologist, TAS

Professor David Bowtell, Director, Research, Peter MacCallum Cancer Institute, VIC

Professor Henry Burger, Prince Henry's Institute for Medical Research, VIC

Professor Alex Crandon, Department of Gynaecological Cancer, The University of Queensland, QLD

Dr Margaret Davy, Gynaecological Oncologist, Royal Adelaide Hospital, SA

Professor Mark Elwood, Director, National Cancer Control Initiative, VIC

Professor Michael Friedlander, Medical Oncologist, Prince of Wales Hospital, NSW

Professor Adele Green, Queensland Institute of Medical Research, QLD

Professor Neville Hacker, Director, Royal Hospital for Women, NSW

Dr Ian Hammond, Gynaecological Cancer Service, King Edward Memorial Hospital, WA

Ms Eugenia Koussidis, Consumer representative, SA

Mr Simon Lee, Director, OvCa Australia, VIC

Dr Amanda McBride, General Practitioner, NSW

Professor Michael Quinn, Gynaecological Oncologist, Royal
Women's Hospital, VIC