

MEDICAL MEDIA PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATE

'Don't Overlook' campaign spotlights the need for rapid diagnosis on World Ovarian Cancer Day

Campaign aims for Primary Care Physicians to better recognise ovarian cancer symptoms and improve access to specialist care

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This World Ovarian Cancer Day, the [Ovarian Cancer Commitment](#) (OCC) is launching the *Don't Overlook*, a new ovarian cancer awareness campaign. *Don't Overlook* is designed to help women and primary care physicians (PCPs) better recognise ovarian cancer symptoms and emphasise the importance of a rapid diagnosis and access to specialist care in managing the disease.

Despite advances in care, many women with ovarian cancer are only diagnosed in the advanced stages of the disease, because the symptoms of ovarian cancer are non-specific.^{1,2} Common symptoms include persistent abdominal swelling or bloating, stomach or lower abdominal pain that doesn't go away, feeling full quickly and / or loss of appetite and needing to urinate more urgently and / or frequently than usual.^{3,4,5} However, these symptoms are frequently overlooked, leading to late diagnosis.^{1,2,3,6} Some estimates suggest that around 15% of women with ovarian cancer die within 2 months of diagnosis, with the average time for a woman to be diagnosed from first noticing symptoms being around 7 months.^{*7,8}

There is still much to be done to ensure women receive their diagnosis before the disease has reached an advanced stage or high burden, and potentially prevent worst outcomes and the high mortality rate.¹ One such intervention is enabling access to specialist care which provides specialised assessment, surgical and systemic treatment in a high-volume setting.⁹ Where available, care should be provided by a Multi-Disciplinary Team of experts, who share clinical information and together choose the best therapeutic options for the patient. Women who receive specialist care benefit from better treatment and survival outcomes versus those who do not.⁹⁻¹² However this care is often overlooked, due to a low level of awareness about its benefits as well as the significant global variation in its availability.⁹

Prof. Christina Fotopoulou, Past ESGO Council Member and Campaign Working Group Chair, said: *"For women diagnosed with ovarian cancer having access to specialist care is a major factor affecting survival rates.⁹ Ovarian cancer is best managed in specialist care centres because they provide assessment, surgery and treatment by Gynaecological Oncologists within a Multi-Disciplinary Team.⁹⁻¹² Therefore, it is critical to ensure patients are diagnosed rapidly and granted access to specialist care where available to achieve better outcomes^{1,9}"*

Ic6 Toth, Past ENGAGE Co-Chair, said: *"Too many women are being diagnosed with ovarian cancer too late.¹ The symptoms can often go unnoticed or be mistaken for more common ailments such as irritable bowel syndrome.^{13,14} With the Don't Overlook campaign we aim to raise awareness among women about the importance of recognising the symptoms of ovarian cancer, as rapid diagnosis is critical to ensuring women can get the care they need as quickly as possible."*

The European Society for Gynaecological Oncology, The European Network of Gynaecological Cancer Advocacy Groups, and AstraZeneca are joining forces to shine a light on the gaps in ovarian cancer care. Together, we urge women and physicians not to overlook ovarian cancer and to act on time and in the right way.

For more information, visit: esgo.org/dont-overlook-campaign

About ovarian cancer symptoms

The symptoms of ovarian cancer are persistent abdominal swelling or bloating, stomach or lower abdominal pain that doesn't go away, feeling full quickly and / or loss of appetite and needing to urinate more urgently and / or frequently than usual.^{3,4,5} Additional symptoms can include persistent indigestion, constipation or diarrhoea, back pain, extreme fatigue, unexplained weight loss, pain during intercourse, menstrual cycle changes, and / or post-menopausal vaginal bleeding.^{3,4,5}

About ovarian cancer

Ovarian cancer is the eighth most common cancer in women worldwide with approximately 314,000 new patients diagnosed with ovarian cancer in 2020, and almost 207,000 deaths. This number is expected to rise by almost 42% by 2040 to over 445,000 newly diagnosed patients and approximately 314,000 deaths.^{8,15} Some estimates suggest that around 15% of women with ovarian cancer die within 2 months of diagnosis, with the average time for a woman to be diagnosed from first noticing symptoms being around 7 months.^{*7,8}

About the Ovarian Cancer Commitment

Don't Overlook has been developed by the OCC founding partners, the European Society of Gynaecological Oncology (ESGO), the European Network of Gynaecological Cancer Advocacy Groups (ENGAGe) and AstraZeneca and has been reviewed and validated by medical experts and patients. The OCC is a growing collaboration of organisations that aims to be the catalyst for a new era of innovation, bringing together stakeholders to accelerate change, and deliver information and science with the goal of improving the management and outcomes of patients with ovarian cancer.

About the OCC founding partners:

- ESGO is the leading European organisation in gynaecological oncology and a forum of more than 2,500 professionals, from across Europe and all around the world, aiming to improve the health and wellbeing of women with gynaecological cancers through prevention, research, excellence in care and education.
- ENGAGe is an ESGO network of over 70 patient advocacy groups from Europe aiming to empower a patient-centric approach to gynaecological cancer care, research and prevention through awareness, advocacy and education of patients as well as the lay public.
- AstraZeneca is a global, science-led biopharmaceutical company that focuses on the discovery, development, and commercialisation of prescription medicines in Oncology, Rare Diseases, and BioPharmaceuticals. The Company's focus is on some of the most challenging cancers and we are leading a revolution in oncology with the ambition to provide cures for cancer in every form.

*This is based on an analysis of the 2018 'Every Woman Study'

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