

Women urged to recognise the signs of ovarian cancer

March 12 2014

(Medical Xpress)—Feeling bloated most days for three weeks or more is the focus of a new Be Clear on Cancer campaign being launched by Public Health England in the North West.

Currently, women in the region have low awareness of [ovarian cancer](#) symptoms. New survey data shows that almost all (97 per cent) don't link persistent bloating with ovarian cancer.

Latest figures show that 854 women were diagnosed with ovarian cancer in the North West in 2011. The same year, 461 women died of the disease in the region.

More than 90 per cent of women diagnosed with the earliest stage of ovarian cancer survive for at least five years. This figure drops sharply to around five per cent for women diagnosed at the most advanced stage.

Around 500 lives could be saved in England each year if survival rates for ovarian cancer matched the best in Europe.

One way of achieving this is through earlier diagnosis. Only 14 per cent of women in the North West would go to their doctor as their first port of call, if they felt bloated most days for three weeks or more.

Professor Richard Edmondson, Professor of Gynaecological Oncology at The University of Manchester – part of Manchester Cancer Research Centre, said: "It is incredibly important for women to be aware of

ovarian cancer symptoms. Treatment is much more successful if the disease is at an early stage. The message to women in the North West is clear - if you feel bloated, most days, for three weeks or more, tell your doctor."

Professor Paul Johnstone, the Regional Director of Public Health for North England said: "Public Health England is launching this campaign not only to raise awareness of symptoms, but to give women the confidence they need to go to their GP if they have concerns. With around 460 women dying of ovarian cancer in the North West each year, it's imperative they know that feeling bloated most days for three weeks or more is not normal."

Of those diagnosed, more than eight in 10 new cases of ovarian cancer are in women aged 50 and over – making this age group a priority for the campaign.

Worryingly, women within this age bracket in the North West are unaware that the risk of ovarian cancer increases with age – almost half (47 per cent) think [women](#) of all ages are equally likely to get ovarian cancer. Less than a fifth (16 per cent) know they are most at risk.

The campaign will see adverts running on TV, radio and in the press in the North West television region. There will also be face-to-face events taking place in public places, including shopping centres in the region.

Provided by University of Manchester

Citation: Women urged to recognise the signs of ovarian cancer (2014, March 12) retrieved 6 January 2023 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-03-women-urged-recognise-ovarian-cancer.html>

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