

Early detection of ovarian cancer

through regular ultrasound examinations

The numbers are for women aged 50 to 74 years without symptoms related to ovarian cancer who either did not participate or participated in an annual ovarian ultrasound examination for early ovarian cancer detection within an average of 11 years.

| | 1,000 women without screening | 1,000 women with screening |
|---|--|--|
| Benefits | | |
| How many died from ovarian cancer? | | No difference: About 3 in each group. |
| How many died overall? | | No difference: About 69 in each group. |
| Harms | | |
| How many without ovarian cancer were mistakenly informed of an abnormal tissue alteration (false alarm) and therefore underwent unnecessary surgery (e.g., removal of healthy ovaries)? | - | 32 |
| How many unnecessarily operated women experienced surgery-related complications?* | - | 1 |

*e.g. infections, blood clots (thromboses), problems with wound closure, anesthesia problems.

Short summary: Early detection of ovarian cancer could not reduce the number of women who died from ovarian cancer. There were six correct diagnoses of ovarian cancer among every 1,000 participants compared with 32 women who had either one or both healthy ovaries removed in unnecessary surgery due to the screening.

Sources: [1] Jacobs et al. Lancet 2016; 387(10022):945-956. [2] Henderson et al. JAMA 2018;319(6):595-606. [3] Menon et al. Lancet Oncol 2009;10(4):327-340.