



**CANCER  
RESEARCH  
UK**

28 October 2016

Mike Hedges AM  
Chair, Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA

Cancer Research UK  
Angel Building  
407 St John Street  
London EC1V 4AD  
United Kingdom

T 020 3469 8469

harpal.kumar@cancer.org.uk  
theresa.lawler@cancer.org.uk  
[www.cruk.org](http://www.cruk.org)

Dear Mr Hedges,

### **Ovarian Cancer Screening**

Thank you for inviting us to submit information regarding the introduction of ovarian cancer screening. Cancer Research UK is supportive of the national screening programmes for breast, bowel and cervical cancer. However, we do not recommend the introduction of a national screening programme for ovarian cancer, as the evidence to date has not shown it can reduce deaths from ovarian cancer.

The results from the 14-year UK Collaborative Trial on Ovarian Cancer Screening (UKCTOCS) were published in December 2015. The results did not show a reduction in deaths from ovarian cancer in the women taking part in screening. While UKCTOCS represents an important step in ovarian cancer research, the scientists behind the trial plan to add more to the evidence by following participants for a longer period of time.

Research so far has shown ovarian cancer screening also carries risk, including psychological distress and unnecessary surgery for women who do not have ovarian cancer. There also needs to be more research into the harms of ovarian cancer screening, so they can be weighed against any benefits shown by further research. We also need a fuller understanding of how ovarian cancer develops and progresses to help inform any future interventions.

It is important to remember that screening programmes are meant for people who don't have symptoms: this is different to having a diagnostic test if you have symptoms. We advise people of any age who notice an unusual or persistent change to their body to tell their doctor.

We want women who present with ovarian cancer symptoms to be able to access the appropriate diagnostic tests quickly, so that optimal treatment is available to them. Cancer Research UK works closely with GPs and other healthcare professionals to ensure they are aware of the symptoms of ovarian cancer and know when and how to refer women for tests to increase the chances of early diagnosis.

Please do let us know if you need any further information.

Yours sincerely,

**Sir Harpal S. Kumar**  
**Chief Executive**

Patron Her Majesty The Queen  
Presidents HRH The Duke of Gloucester KG GCMG and HRH Princess Alexandra, the Hon. Lady Ogilvy KG GCMG  
Chief Executive Harpal S. Kumar  
Registered Charity in England and Wales (1089464), Scotland (SC041666) and the Isle of Man (1103)  
Registered Company limited by guarantee in England and Wales (4325234) and registered in the Isle of Man (5713F)  
Registered Address Angel Building, 407 St John Street, London EC1V 4AD