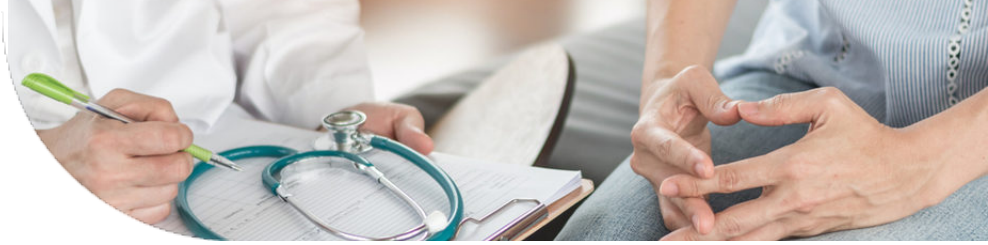

Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month: Recent Developments in Treatment

March 2021 is Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month.

Ovarian cancer is one of the most common types of cancer in women. It affects thousands of women in the UK each year and is often fatal.

Over the next few weeks, we will be posting blogs looking at various aspects of ovarian cancer, including:

- Recent developments in treating ovarian cancer;
- Whether more can be done to reduce the number of preventable cases;
- What impact Covid-19 has had on diagnosis and treatment of ovarian cancer; and
- A case study looking at how we can help people who have been affected by ovarian cancer which could have been avoided if they had received the appropriate care.

Recent developments in treating ovarian cancer

Today we begin by looking at recent developments in treating ovarian cancer.

Traditionally, the main way of treating ovarian cancer is through surgery to remove cancer and chemotherapy to prevent it from coming back.

Ovarian cancer typically responds well to chemotherapy, but then comes back quickly after the treatment is complete. Some ovarian cancers are resistant to chemotherapy making them even harder to treat.

Recent advances in ovarian cancer research have increased the options available for patients with ovarian

Tel: 0344 967 0793 | Email: info@LA-Law.com | www.lesteraldridge.com

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cancer, discovering new and improved ways of combating this deadly disease.

These advances include improved methods of giving chemotherapy and the discovery of medication which can slow the growth of cancer.

PARP inhibitors in ovarian cancer treatment

One of the most significant developments has been the discovery of PARP inhibitors.

PARP is a protein found in our cells that helps damaged cells repair themselves. A PARP inhibitor prevents cancer cells from repairing and re-growing after they have been treated by chemotherapy.

The benefit of this treatment is that it gives patients more time after their initial chemotherapy before the cancer returns. It can be an alternative to further surgery or more chemotherapy and can improve quality of life.

PARP inhibitors are now available as part of NHS treatment, and new versions of these drugs are being discovered and approved for use, extending the options available for patients even further.

Other tests and cancer drugs

The Institute of Cancer Research UK has also discovered that a simple test using an MRI scan can be used to predict whether women with advanced ovarian cancer will respond well to treatment.

They have also recently announced that they are in the process of developing and trialling a new drug that they claim works in a different way from any other existing drug. They have indicated that the drug works by directly targeting and killing ovarian cancer cells.

Through these ongoing advances, there is hope that ovarian cancer will eventually become a treatable condition, as opposed to a fatal disease.

Find out more about Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month

If you would like to learn more about ovarian cancer awareness month, there are a number of charities campaigning to raise awareness, such as Target Ovarian Cancer, Ovarian Cancer Action and Ovacome to name a few.

For more information see:

- Target Ovarian Cancer

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- Ovarian Cancer Action
- Ovacome

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