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Exploring variations in ovarian cancer survival by age and stage (ICBP SurvMark-2) : A population-based study

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1 **Exploring variations in ovarian cancer survival by age and stage (ICBP SurvMark-2): a**
2 **population-based study**

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4 Citadel J Cabasag^a, John Butler^b, Melina Arnold^l, Mark Rutherford^{a, c}, Aude Bardot^a, Jacques Ferlay^a,
5 Eileen Morgan^d, Bjørn Møller^e, Anna Gavin^d, Charles Norell^f, Samantha Harrison^f, Nathalie Saint-
6 Jacques^g, Michael Eden^h, Brian Rous^h, Andy Nordinⁱ, Louise Hanna^j, Janice Kwon^k, Paul Cohen^{l, m},
7 Alon Altmanⁿ, Lorraine Shack^o, Serena Kozié^p, Gerda Engholm^q, Prithwish De^r, Peter Sykes^s, Geoff
8 Porter^t, Sarah Ferguson^u, Paul Walsh^v, Richard Trevithick^w, Dianne O'Connell^x, Freddie Bray^a,
9 Isabelle Soerjomataram^a

10

11 ^a Section of Cancer Surveillance, International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC/WHO), 150
12 Cours Albert Thomas, Lyon, 69372 CEDEX 08, France

13 ^b Royal Marsden Hospital, Fulham Road, London SW3 6JJ, England, UK

14 ^c Biostatistics Research Group, Department of Health Sciences, University of Leicester, University
15 Road, Leicester, LE1 7RH, UK

16 ^d Northern Ireland Cancer Registry, Centre for Public Health, Queen's University Belfast, Belfast,
17 Northern Ireland, UK

18 ^e Cancer Registry of Norway, Institute of Population-based Cancer Research, P.O. Box 5313
19 Majorstuen, 0304 Oslo, Norway

20 ^f Policy & Information Directorate, Cancer Research UK, London, England, UK

21 ^g Nova Scotia Health Authority Cancer Care Program, Registry & Analytics, 1276 South Street,
22 Halifax, B3H 2Y9, NS, Canada

23 ^h National Cancer Registrations and Analysis Service, Public Health England, Wellington House,
24 London, UK

25 ⁱ East Kent Hospitals University National Health Service Foundation Trust, Kent, England, UK

26 ^j Velindre National Health Service Trust, Cardiff, England, UK

27 ^k Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Division of Surgical Oncology, University of British
28 Columbia, and British Columbia Cancer Agency, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

29 ¹ University of Western Australia, Division of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Crawley, Western
30 Australia, Australia

31 ^m St John of God Subiaco Hospital, Subiaco, Western Australia, Australia

32 ⁿ Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Sciences, University of Manitoba,
33 Winnipeg, MB R3A 1R9, Canada

34 ^o Cancer Control Alberta, Alberta Health Services, 2210 2nd Street, SW Calgary AB, T2S 3C3,
35 Canada

36 ^p Registry Department, Saskatchewan Cancer Agency, Regina, SK S4W 0G3 Canada

37 ^q Danish Cancer Society, Strandboulevarden 49, 2100 Copenhagen, Denmark

38 ^r Surveillance & Cancer Registry, Cancer Care Ontario, 620 University Ave., Toronto, ON M5G 2L7,
39 Canada

40 ^s University of Otago, Christchurch, New Zealand

41 ^t Canadian Partnership Against Cancer, 145 King Street West, Suite 900, Toronto, Ontario M5H 1J8,
42 Canada

43 ^u Gynecologic Oncology, Princess Margaret Hospital Cancer Centre, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

44 ^v National Cancer Registry Ireland, Cork Airport Business Park, Kinsale Road, Cork T12 CDF7,
45 Ireland

46 ^w Western Australia Cancer and Palliative Care Network Policy Unit, Health Networks Branch,
47 Department of Health, Perth, Western Australia, Australia

48 ^x Cancer Research Division, Cancer Council New South Wales, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia

49

50

51 **Correspondence to:**

52 Citadel J. Cabasag, PhD, MS

53 Section of Cancer Surveillance

54 International Agency for Research on Cancer

55 150 cours Albert Thomas

56 69372 Lyon CEDEX 08, France

57 Email: CabasagC@fellows.iarc.fr

58 Telephone: +33 4 72 73 80 15

59 Fax: +33 4 72 73 86 96

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85 **Abstract**

86 *Objective:* The study aims to evaluate the differences in ovarian cancer survival by age and stage at
87 diagnosis within and across seven high-income countries.

88

89 *Methods:* We analyzed data from 58,161 women diagnosed with ovarian cancer during 2010-2014,
90 followed until 31 December 2015, from 21 population-based cancer registries in Australia, Canada,
91 Denmark, Ireland, New Zealand, Norway, and United Kingdom. Comparisons of 1-year and 3-year
92 age- and stage-specific net survival (NS) between countries were performed using the period analysis
93 approach.

94

95 *Results:* Minor variation in the stage distribution was observed between countries, with most women
96 being diagnosed with ‘distant’ stage (ranging between 64% in Canada and 71% in Norway). The 3-
97 year all-ages NS ranged from 45-57% with Australia (56%) and Norway (57%) demonstrating the
98 highest survival. The proportion of women with ‘distant’ stage was highest for those aged 65-74 and
99 75-99 years and varied markedly between countries (range:72-80% and 77-87%, respectively). The
100 oldest age group had the lowest 3-year age-specific survival (20-34%), and women aged 65-74
101 exhibited the widest variation across countries (3-year NS range: 40-60%). Differences in survival
102 between countries were particularly stark for the oldest age group with ‘distant’ stage (3-year NS
103 range: 12% in Ireland to 24% in Norway).

104

105 *Conclusions:* International variations in ovarian cancer survival by stage exist with the largest
106 differences observed in the oldest age group with advanced disease. This finding endorses further
107 research investigating international differences in access to and quality of treatment, and prevalence
108 of comorbid conditions particularly in older women with advanced disease.

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111

112

113 **Introduction**

114 Ovarian cancer is the 8th most common cancer (excluding easily treatable, non-melanoma
115 skin cancer) and the 5th leading cause of cancer death among women in high-income countries [1].
116 While incidence rates have decreased across most high-income countries over the past three decades,
117 mortality rates declined in a slower pace [2]. Ovarian cancer symptoms are non-specific and early
118 stage ovarian cancer is often asymptomatic. Several early detection methods have been introduced for
119 ovarian cancer, however, currently screening is not feasible due to the low sensitivity and specificity
120 of available tests [3]. Chemotherapy regimens for ovarian cancer have evolved with recent advances
121 including the introduction of anti-angiogenic therapy and the use of targeted therapies such as
122 poly(adenosine-diphosphate ribose) polymerase (PARP) inhibitors [4].

123 Previous large population-based studies have reported substantial differences in ovarian
124 cancer survival between high-income countries [5, 6]. There are many complex factors that impact
125 cancer survival, including age and stage at diagnosis, as well as availability of diagnostic resources
126 and access to optimal treatments [5, 7]. A previous study by the International Cancer Benchmarking
127 Partnership (ICBP) showed that more than half of all ovarian cancer cases occurred in women older
128 than 65 years, and the majority of women were diagnosed with advanced stage disease [8]. Thus,
129 understanding stage distribution as well as survival by stage as it relates to age at ovarian cancer
130 diagnosis is essential to inform improvements in policy and practice.

131 This study evaluates the differences in survival by age and stage at diagnosis within and
132 across seven high-income countries. The ICBP is a collaboration of population-based cancer
133 registries, clinicians, researchers, and policymakers from countries with similar cancer registry
134 coverage, national health system expenditure and universal access to healthcare. Using the most up-
135 to-date, real-world data, the ICBP investigates international differences in cancer survival in order to
136 identify areas where practice can be improved through evidence-based recommendations.

137

138 **Methods**

139 Study population

140 Detailed description of the data collection and processing in the ICBP SurvMark-2 project
141 was previously described by Arnold and colleagues (2019) [9]. Data for ovarian cancer cases were
142 obtained from 21 population-based cancer registries (PBCRs). These included Australia (New South
143 Wales (NSW), Victoria, and Western Australia), Canada (Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New
144 Brunswick, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, and Saskatchewan),
145 Denmark, Ireland, New Zealand, Norway, and the United Kingdom (UK) (England, Northern Ireland,
146 Scotland, and Wales). We only included all cases with diagnosis of first primary ovarian cancer,
147 including malignant cancer of the ovary (C56 – all subtypes), fallopian tubes (C57.0 – all subtypes),
148 and peritoneum (C48.1-2 with the following histology: 8010-8035, 8041-8046, 8050- 8148, 8160-
149 8231, 8246, 8250-8530, 8541, 8550-8576, 8590-8670, 8931, 8933, 8934, 8935, 8950, 8959, 8980-
150 8982, 9000, 9014, 9015, 9060-9090, 9100, 9110), defined according to the *International*
151 *Classification of Disease (ICD) 10th revision*. Cases diagnosed from 1 January 2010 to 31 December
152 2014 were included in the study, except for Ireland where at the time of collection data for incident
153 cases were only available until 2013. The women were followed until 31 December 2015, except for
154 two jurisdictions in Canada (Ontario and Newfoundland) where cases were followed until 31
155 December 2014. Initially, 58,161 women were included in the study (**Supplementary figure S1**).

156 The study included both epithelial and non-epithelial ovarian cancer, but excluded non-
157 invasive tumors (i.e. benign, in situ or those with uncertain-malignant potential) and all tumors with
158 specified ‘borderline’ histology codes– 8442, 8451, 8462, 8472, and 8473– based on *ICD for*
159 *Oncology 3rd revision*. For survival analyses, death certificate only cases, cases identified at autopsy,
160 as well as cases with missing month or year for the date of diagnosis or last contact were excluded.
161 The analysis was also limited to those aged 15-99 years at diagnosis. Additional quality controls on
162 stage at diagnosis were carried out, including for inconsistencies in tumor behavior, and basis of
163 diagnosis. There were 56,818 cases in the study after these exclusions. Data from cancer registries
164 with more than 50% missing or unknown stage at diagnosis for the combined period (2010-2014)
165 (Australia – Victoria and Western Australia; and Canada – British Columbia, New Brunswick,
166 Ontario, and Quebec) were excluded from all analyses involving stage.

167

168 Stage at diagnosis

169 Each participating cancer registry were asked to provide all available data on stage at
170 diagnosis including the Surveillance, Epidemiology and End Result (SEER) Summary Stage 2000
171 (SS2000), FIGO staging with sub-stage categories (e.g. 1a, 1b, 1c), as well as individualized clinical
172 and pathological information on the extent of the tumor (T), nodal involvement (N), and metastasis
173 (M). Pathological data were prioritized over clinical data for T and N, while clinical M was
174 prioritized over pathological M. For the diagnosis period included in the analysis, the TNM edition
175 (5th, 6th or 7th) used varied between registries or years, however, the TNM criteria remained the same
176 between editions for ovarian and fallopian tube cancers.

177 *Australia & New Zealand*

178 Australia and New Zealand only had SEER staging data. Therefore, these countries were not
179 included in the survival analysis by TNM or FIGO stage. Data on stage at diagnosis in Australia was
180 only available for NSW.

181 *Canada*

182 Individualized TNM data were available for most Canadian provinces included in the study
183 (Alberta, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Saskatchewan), and individualized
184 TNM derived from Collaborative stage [10] was available for Manitoba. These provinces also
185 provided SEER stage information.

186 *Denmark & Ireland*

187 Cancer registries in Denmark and Ireland provided individualized TNM data. For both
188 countries, TNM information was converted to SEER stage.

189 *Norway*

190 FIGO staging was available for almost half of the Norwegian ovarian cancer cases. To
191 account for the remaining portion of cases, Norway has a specific coding system describing the extent
192 of the disease based on information collected from clinical and pathological forms. This information
193 was then converted to SEER staging and provided by the cancer registry.

194 *United Kingdom*

195 All four national cancer registries in the UK had data on individualized TNM, as well as
196 FIGO staging. Additional stage information was integrated in the T, N and M variables by the cancer
197 registries in England and Wales. This registry derived T, N, and M information was used for England
198 and Wales when converting to SEER staging, and supplemented with FIGO stage.

199

200 Mapping SEER stage

201 Coding and classification of stage at diagnosis varied between cancer registries.
202 Consequently, for comparisons, stage information from cancer registries utilizing the TNM or FIGO
203 staging system was converted to a mapped stage with four stage categories (i.e. ‘localized’, ‘regional’,
204 ‘distant’, and unknown/missing stage based on SS2000) by using an algorithm proposed by Walters
205 and colleagues (2013), which is summarized in **Supplementary table S2** [11, 12]. A validation study
206 was performed using our current data (2010-2014) from selected Canadian provinces
207 (**Supplementary table S3**). Ovarian and fallopian tubes cancer cases with known SEER stage data
208 and with mapped SEER stage derived from TNM data were included in the validation analysis.
209 Mapped SEER stage was generated using the ICBP algorithm and compared to the SEER stage data
210 originally provided by the cancer registries. The validation study using Canadian data showed that
211 1.9% of the 2,456 cases evaluated had mapped SEER stage that did not match the original SEER stage
212 data provided by the cancer registry. In the study, survival analysis by stage was performed for both
213 TNM and SEER staging.

214

215 Statistical analysis

216 Survival by TNM or FIGO stage was calculated for Canada, Denmark, Ireland, and the UK.
217 FIGO staging data with sub-categories was prioritized over individualized TNM clinical and
218 pathological information for TNM stage. Nodal involvement coded as “NX” was assumed to be N0,
219 and metastasis coded as “MX” was assumed to be M0. In the current study, stage I-IV was used to
220 refer to TNM or FIGO stage.

221 **Supplementary figure S4** illustrates the process to harmonize stage for ovarian cancer.

222 Australia and New Zealand only had SEER stage data, while Canada had SEER stage as well as

223 individualized TNM. For cases where SEER data is missing or unknown in Canada, the
224 individualized TNM data was used to generate mapped SEER stage. In Norway, mapped SEER stage
225 was generated for cases with FIGO staging. SEER stage data derived from the extent of disease was
226 then used when FIGO staging was not available. For Denmark, Ireland and UK, where SEER staging
227 data were not available, TNM and FIGO staging were mapped to SEER. Individualized TNM data
228 were initially used for mapping to SEER, followed by FIGO, when available. All cancer of the
229 peritoneum was assigned 'distant' stage.

230 For cases with missing stage at diagnosis, stage was imputed using multinomial logistic
231 regression with the following covariates: age (fitted with splines), vital status, and the Nelson-Aalen
232 estimator of the cumulative hazard (survival time). Year at diagnosis treated as a factor was also
233 added in the regression model. Additionally, the model allowed each cancer registries to have
234 different coefficients specifically for countries with multiple registries, namely Canada and UK.
235 Furthermore, individual regions in England were considered in the regression model when imputing
236 stage for the UK. Thirty imputations were performed, and results from each imputation were
237 aggregated according to Rubin's rule to estimate net survival (NS). NS is a ratio of the overall
238 survival of individuals with ovarian cancer and the expected survival from the similar population
239 without ovarian cancer determined using the lifetables of the general population assuming cancer
240 death is negligible in the general population [13]. To account for population difference, the
241 background mortality of the general population was derived from life tables from each cancer registry
242 containing all-cause death rates by sex, age, and calendar year from 1995 to 2015. Additionally, the
243 95% confidence intervals were also presented for all NS estimates.

244 The Pohar-Perme estimator was used to estimate the 1-year and 3-year NS using the period
245 analysis approach for the most recent 3-year period: 2012-2014, except for Ireland (2011-2013) [14].
246 All cases that are alive in any point of the 3-year period contributed to the survival analysis, including
247 cases diagnosed prior to 2012 (2011 for Ireland). All-ages and stage-specific age-standardized NS
248 were calculated using the International Cancer Survival Standard (ICSS) weights with five age
249 categories: 15-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65-74, and 75-99 years [15]. Stage categories with less than 30
250 cases were excluded in the stage-specific survival analysis. For cancer registry-specific survival

251 analyses, registries with less than 100 cases were excluded since the estimates were unstable (i.e.
252 Prince Edward Island, Canada). All analyses in the study were performed using Stata/IC version 14.2
253 (StataCorp. 2015. Stata Statistical Software: Release 14.2; College Station, TX: StataCorp LP).

254

255 **Results**

256 Patients' characteristics including cancer stage by country

257 The median age at diagnosis ranged from 63 years in Canada to 67 years in Denmark and UK
258 (**Table 1**). The proportion of cases with unknown stage was smallest in Canada (TNM=3.6%;
259 SEER=3.0%) and largest in the UK (TNM=27.4%; SEER=27.1%). There were minimal differences in
260 the stage distribution before and after unknown stage at diagnosis was imputed. The largest proportion
261 of cases were diagnosed at advanced stage, and variations between countries were minor for both
262 TNM stage, as well as, SEER stage with 'distant' stage ranging from 63.7% in Canada to 71.3% in
263 Norway after imputing unknown stage at diagnosis. Women aged 15-44 years were predominantly
264 diagnosed with 'localized' and 'regional' disease (**Supplementary figure S5**). Increasing proportions
265 of advanced stage disease were observed with increasing age. The older age group (e.g. 75-99 years)
266 were more commonly diagnosed with 'distant' stage ovarian cancer compared to women aged 15-44
267 years; i.e. 77.9-86.7% versus 29.4-45.1%, respectively.

268

269 All-ages and age-specific survival

270 Marked differences in all-ages NS were observed between countries at 1 and 3 years after
271 diagnosis (including all cancer registries regardless of stage completeness) (**Table 2 and Figure 1**).
272 For all cases combined, Ireland had the lowest 3-year NS (NS 44.8%, 95% CI 42.0-47.5) followed by
273 New Zealand (NS 45.5%, 95% CI 42.4-48.6), while Norway ranked highest (NS 57.2%, 95% CI 54.6-
274 59.7) followed by Australia (NS 56.4%, 95% CI 54.4-58.2) and Denmark (NS 53.6%, 95% CI 51.2-
275 55.9) (**Table 2B**). A similar pattern was observed in 1-year NS (**Table 2A**). The 1-year and 3-year NS
276 estimates using the original data with missing stage are presented in **Supplementary table S6**.
277 Minimal variations in NS estimates were observed when comparing original un-imputed data versus
278 data with imputed stage at diagnosis for missing or unknown stage (**Supplementary figure S7**). Inter-

279 jurisdictional differences (between cancer registries within the same country) in 1-year and 3-year NS
280 were also observed (**Figure 1, Supplementary table S8-10**).

281 Generally, survival decreased with increasing age at diagnosis and women in the oldest age
282 group (75-99 years) had the lowest survival. Survival also varied between countries in each age
283 category with the widest difference seen in women aged 65-74 years. The 3-year all-ages NS for this
284 age group ranged from 40.1% (95% CI 34.9-45.3) to 60.1% (95% CI 55.4-64.5) in Ireland and
285 Norway, respectively. A similar pattern was observed for 1-year survival.

286

287 Stage-specific survival

288 **Figure 2** illustrates 1- and 3-year NS by country and stage with details presented in **Table 2**.
289 Survival markedly decreased with advancing stage with ‘distant’ stage exhibiting the lowest NS for
290 all countries. Variations in 1- and 3-year NS were observed in all three SEER stage categories.
291 Australia and Norway had the highest 3-year NS for ‘distant’ stage (NS 46.9%, 95% CI 44.0-49.8;
292 and NS 46.7%, 95% CI 43.8-49.5, respectively) (**Figure 2A**). The UK, Ireland and New Zealand had
293 the lowest survival for ‘distant’ stage cancers (NS 33.4%, 95% CI 32.6-34.2; NS 32.3%, 95% CI 29.3-
294 35.3; and NS 31.6%, 95% CI 28.1-35.0, respectively). For countries with TNM and FIGO staging,
295 Denmark had the highest 3-year NS for advanced disease: stage III (NS 48.7%, 95% CI 44.9-52.6)
296 and IV (NS 35.1%, 95% CI 31.3-38.9) (**Figure 2B**). Similar patterns were observed for 1-year NS
297 with slightly less pronounced international differences.

298

299 Age-specific survival by stage

300 International survival differences by age groups were less stark for early stage disease. The 1-
301 and 3-year NS for ‘localized’ cancer among women aged 15-64 years were approximately 90% or
302 higher for all countries in the analysis. In contrast, marked differences in survival between countries
303 were observed among women with ‘distant’ stage, in particular those in the two oldest age groups (65-
304 74 and 75-99 years) (**Figure 3**). Among women aged 65-74 years and diagnosed with ‘distant’
305 disease, the 3-year NS ranged from 28.6% (95% CI 23.0-34.2) in Ireland to 52.4% (95% CI 47.2-

306 57.5) in Norway; and at 75-99 years, 3-year NS ranged from 11.5% (95% CI 7.4-15.5) in Ireland to
307 25.0% (95% CI 20.2-29.8) in Australia (**Table 2B**).

308

309 Survival differences within country by stage

310 Inter-jurisdictional differences within countries were also observed (**Supplementary table**
311 **S8-10**). Among Australian cancer registries, Victoria had the lowest all-ages 3-year NS of 55.8%
312 (95% CI 52.9-58.6) and Western Australia had the highest (NS 60.8%, 95% CI 56.1-65.1). In Canada,
313 3-year NS ranged from 48.1% (95% CI 41.4-54.5) in New Brunswick to 53.3% (95% CI 46.7-59.4) in
314 Manitoba. Among women with 'distant' stage, the 3-year survival ranged from 31.9% (95% CI 25.1-
315 38.7) (Nova Scotia) to 38.6% (95% CI 34.4-42.8) (Alberta). Within the UK, Northern Ireland (NS
316 42.5%, 95% CI 38.4-46.5) showed the lowest 3-year all-ages NS, and England exhibited the highest
317 (NS 47.9%, 95% CI 47.2-48.7). For the 'distant' stage the 3-year NS ranged from 26.9% (95% CI
318 22.6-31.2) (Northern Ireland) to 34.2% (95% CI 33.4-35.1) (England). Similar patterns were observed
319 for 1-year NS.

320

321 **Discussion**

322 This study presents the most up-to-date estimates of all-ages, stage- and age-specific 1-year
323 and 3-year NS for ovarian cancer across seven high-income countries. NS was highest in Norway,
324 Australia, and Denmark followed by Canada, whereas the UK, New Zealand and Ireland exhibited
325 lower NS. Survival differences between countries were most pronounced in older women and women
326 with 'distant' stage disease. The latter represents the majority of ovarian cancer cases. Consequently,
327 the largest variation in survival was observed for women with both characteristics– older age women
328 with advanced disease. Higher NS in Norway, Australia, and Denmark specifically for advanced stage
329 cancers and for older women contributed to their higher all-ages NS.

330 In our study, survival estimates for less-advanced stage ('localized' and 'regional') were
331 dramatically higher than 'distant' stage, and younger women were commonly diagnosed with less-
332 advanced stage disease. Although uncommon, non-epithelial ovarian cancer are more often found in
333 younger women and this may contribute to higher survival in less-advanced stage [16]. In contrast to

334 epithelial ovarian cancer, survival in non-epithelial ovarian cancer, such as germ cell and sex cord-
335 stromal tumors, is generally higher [17].

336 Compared to the previous ICBP study of women diagnosed with ovarian cancer from 2004-
337 2007, all-ages NS has increased in all countries with marked improvements in Denmark and Norway
338 [8]. The centralization of healthcare services for the management of ovarian cancer has previously
339 been associated with survival increases in several countries, and may partly explain the improved
340 survival in some countries in the current study [18-21]. The ICBP previously reported lower ovarian
341 cancer survival in Denmark [8]. However, the implementation of a national cancer patient pathway in
342 Denmark has had a profound effect on reducing delays in diagnosis and treatment [21]. While some
343 participating countries have conducted similar reforms, these changes have been more recent
344 [22]. Thus, the expansion of health systems and improvements in the organization of treatment
345 services may potentially improve outcomes and likely narrow the differences in survival.

346 In our study, the majority of women with ovarian cancer are diagnosed with advanced stage.
347 Differences in the stage distribution between countries may indicate differences in patients' help-
348 seeking, recognition of signs and symptoms in primary care, timely referral, as well as diagnostic
349 practices, and may partially explain international differences in overall survival [23, 24]. More
350 recently, positron emission tomography combined with computed tomography (PET-CT) has been
351 increasingly used for diagnosis and staging in women with advanced ovarian cancer [25]. A Danish
352 study reported increase in stage IV ovarian cancer over the calendar period 1995-2012, which may be
353 related to upstaging due to PET-CT [21, 26, 27]. Tools that are able to more accurately stage ovarian
354 cancer, such as the PET-CT, leads to patients receiving more appropriate treatments, and are thus
355 likely to improve survival. Upstaging may partly contribute to higher survival among patients with
356 advanced disease in some countries observed in this current study. Increased access to and use of
357 PET-CT for ovarian cancer diagnosis may therefore improve staging and may result in further
358 improvements in, and comparability of, survival by stage in the future.

359 Net survival varied substantially with age at diagnosis as women aged 75-99 years
360 consistently had the lowest NS. The international survival gap was also large for this age group.
361 Variation in ovarian cancer survival between younger and older patients has previously been reported

362 [28]. In general, older women present more commonly with advanced disease compared to younger
363 women [29]. Other factors, such as different histology present in different age groups, differences in
364 patient' performance status or comorbidity, delays in diagnosis, and variation in cancer treatment,
365 might explain the survival gap between younger and older patients [30, 31]. Furthermore, older
366 women have been shown to receive suboptimal treatment compared to younger women [29, 32].
367 Better understanding of ovarian cancer treatment practices among older women, and improvements in
368 the way older women are clinically reviewed (e.g. performance status) and staged will lead to more
369 appropriate treatment planning, increasing the amount of radical treatment given regardless of age.
370 This subsequently could lead to better outcomes and reductions in international survival variation.

371 Variation in the care and management of ovarian cancer patients, as well as adherence to
372 treatment guidelines, may also potentially contribute to international variations in survival. The
373 standard treatment for ovarian cancer involves cytoreductive surgery followed by chemotherapy [33].
374 Radical surgery to achieve 'zero residual disease' at primary cytoreduction surgery is an important
375 determinant of survival for women with advanced disease [34]. However, some women with
376 advanced disease may not receive cancer-directed treatment due to varying reasons including patient's
377 choice and poor condition of the patient [35]. Overall, recommendations in clinical practice guidelines
378 for ovarian cancer, particularly surgery, have generally remained consistent across countries [31, 36,
379 37]. Within the study period (2010-2014) neoadjuvant chemotherapy (NACT) followed by interval
380 cytoreduction surgery was increasingly utilized in the treatment of advanced ovarian cancer, however,
381 the effect of NACT in ovarian cancer survival continuous to be debated [38-40]. Nevertheless, it is
382 plausible that international differences in the uptake of NACT may have also contributed to the
383 observed survival variation.

384

385 *Strengths and limitations*

386 In our current study, all datasets were subjected to extensive cleaning, harmonization and
387 checking prior to analysis to ensure the highest possible data quality. However, completeness and
388 accuracy of data could vary between cancer registries. In general, the availability of stage at diagnosis
389 had improved in the last study period for all cancer registries included in the analysis. The study was

390 limited to cancer registries with complete stage data for 50% or more of the cases for 2010-2014 (i.e.
391 excluding some cancer registries within Canada and Australia). As a result, the estimated NS
392 presented in the current study may not be representative of the nation-wide survival, and may only be
393 applicable for cancer registries included in the analysis. Some registries also had relatively small
394 numbers of cases, especially in the younger age groups, resulting in unstable NS and wider confidence
395 intervals.

396 Additionally, the analysis was restricted to 2010-2014 since the completeness of stage data in
397 the years prior to this period was lower in most cancer registries. Stage at diagnosis was also imputed
398 for cases that had missing or unknown stage. The missing cases may be missing not at random
399 (MNAR); consequently, a sensitivity analysis was performed removing survival time variable to the
400 regression model. The analysis showed no difference in the stage distribution and NS estimates.

401 Moreover, staging classification varied widely across countries, and thus a mapped stage was
402 determined for cancer registries that lack SEER stage by using a stage conversion algorithm
403 previously developed by Walters and colleagues (2013) [12]. Based on our validation study using the
404 Canadian data (2010-2014) misclassification of some cases has occurred in this study, although, the
405 proportion of the cases misclassified is likely small. Consequently, this limitation should be carefully
406 considered when making inferences of the results. NS by TNM stage was also presented in the current
407 study for countries with only TNM and/or FIGO stage data. Similar patterns were observed in SEER
408 and TNM stage analyses.

409 Differences in cancer registry practices and the quality of the stage data between cancer
410 registries may also potentially contribute to the differences in estimates of survival by stage that were
411 observed in the current study. It is therefore important to consider these variations when making
412 comparisons between countries and cancer registries. The study only included long established
413 PBCRs with high-quality data, and information from each cancer registry was carefully reviewed and
414 processed independently. Nevertheless, stage comparisons remain challenging since the completeness
415 of staging data, as well as the staging system used, varied between cancer registries and countries.

416 The current study highlights the need for a common international staging system to perform
417 more accurate cancer survival comparisons between countries. For the purpose of international

418 comparisons, our main results are presented using SEER staging as well as TNM staging when
419 available. FIGO and TNM staging is more detailed and regularly updated according to the most recent
420 clinical evidence and should be used when available.

421

422 *Conclusion*

423 Our study highlights existing international survival differences amongst women diagnosed
424 with ovarian cancer in seven high-income countries. The findings showed that survival differences
425 between countries were most pronounced for older women and women with advanced disease at
426 diagnosis. Survival variations between countries are suggestive of differences in access to and quality
427 of care, adherence to national and international guidelines, differences in surgical philosophy and
428 treatment approaches, prevalence of co-morbidities and the organization of healthcare services across
429 countries – all factors which warrant further investigation and will be explored as part of the second
430 phase of ICBP.

431

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445 Where authors are identified as personnel of the International Agency for Research on Cancer
446 / World Health Organization, the authors alone are responsible for the views expressed in this article
447 and they do not necessarily represent the decisions, policy or views of the International Agency for
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449

450 **Conflict of interest**

451 None of the authors have any potential conflicts (financial, professional, or personal) related
452 to the manuscript to disclose.

453

454 **Authors' contribution**

455 Citadel Cabasag planned and carried out the analysis with the supervision of Isabelle
456 Soerjomataram, and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Isabelle Soerjomataram, Freddie Bray, and
457 Melina Arnold conceived the project, participated in the study design and coordination, and provided
458 important intellectual content. Mark Rutherford aided in the study design, the statistical analysis, and
459 the interpretation of the results. John Butler provided critical revision and gave consultation on the
460 figures. Aude Bardot and Jacques Ferlay contributed to data preparation and management. All other
461 authors have reviewed the manuscript and provided critical feedback. All authors gave their approval
462 to submit the manuscript.

463

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564

565 **Table and figure legends**

566 **Supplemental figure 1.** Study population inclusion criteria

567 **Supplementary table S2.** T, N & M or FIGO stage mapped to SEER staging for ovarian cancer based
568 on ICBP algorithm developed by Walters and colleagues (2013)

569 **Supplementary table S3.** Comparison of SEER stage data provided by the Canadian cancer registries
570 versus mapped SEER stage generated using ICBP algorithm developed by Walters and colleagues
571 (2013)

572 **Supplementary figure S4.** Flowchart on stage harmonization for ovarian cancer

573 **Table 1.** Total number of cases by TNM^a and mapped SEER stage for women diagnosed with ovarian
574 cancer in seven countries between 2010 and 2014

575 **Supplementary figure S5.** Proportions of women diagnosed with ovarian cancer during 2010-2014
576 by age, mapped SEER stage and country after imputation of stage at diagnosis

577 **Table 2.** (A) 1-year and (B) 3-year net survival (%) and 95% confidence interval for women
578 diagnosed with ovarian cancer between 2010 and 2014 by age, stage, and country after imputing stage
579 at diagnosis

580 **Figure 1.** Age-standardized all-ages net survival for women diagnosed with ovarian cancer between
581 2010 and 2014^a by country and jurisdiction within countries. Abbreviations: (Australia jurisdictions)
582 NSW = New South Wales, VIC = Victoria, WA = Western Australia; (Canada jurisdictions) AB =
583 Alberta, BC = British Columbia, MB = Manitoba, NM = New Brunswick, NF = Newfoundland &
584 Labrador, NS = Nova Scotia, PE = Prince Edward Island, ON = Ontario, QC = Quebec, SK =
585 Saskatchewan; (UK - United Kingdom) ENG = England, NIR = North Ireland, SCO = Scotland,
586 WAL = Wales, ^a Ireland (2010-2013).

587 **Supplementary table S6.** Net survival (%) and 95% confidence interval for women diagnosed with
588 ovarian cancer between 2010 and 2014 by age, stage, and country prior to imputation of stage at
589 diagnosis

590 **Supplementary figure S7.** Comparison of estimated 1-year and 3-year net survival between original
591 data with unknown or missing stage and imputed stage data for 2010-2014 study period

592 **Supplementary table S8.** Net survival (%) and 95% confidence interval for Australian women
593 diagnosed with ovarian cancer in Victoria and Western Australia between 2010 and 2014 by age and
594 stage

595 **Supplementary table S9.** Net survival (%) and 95% confidence interval for Canadian women
596 diagnosed with ovarian cancer between 2010 and 2014 by age, stage, and province after imputing
597 stage at diagnosis

598 **Supplementary table S10.** Net survival (%) and 95% confidence interval for women diagnosed with
599 ovarian cancer in United Kingdom between 2010 and 2014 by age, stage, and nation after imputing
600 stage

601 **Figure 2.** Age-standardized 1-year and 3-year net survival and 95% confidence intervals for ovarian
602 cancer patients diagnosed between 2010 and 2014^a by mapped SEER stage (A) and TNM stage (B)
603 after imputing stage at diagnosis. Abbreviations: pop=population, ^a Ireland (2010-2013).

604 **Figure 3.** Age-specific 3-year net survival (with 95% confidence interval) among women diagnosed
605 with 'distant' ovarian cancer between 2010 and 2014^a by country after imputation of stage at
606 diagnosis. Abbreviations: pop=population, ^a Ireland (2010-2013).