

On Target

Summer 2021

It's not often I get to introduce On Target by telling you that two types of treatment have just been made available to thousands of women newly diagnosed with ovarian cancer. But that's the incredibly good news I can share with you today.



This kind of amazing news is exactly what we work towards here at Target Ovarian Cancer. It's therefore a major focus of this issue.

Of course, treatment breakthroughs like this can only be made possible through research. Most of us tend to picture research projects leading to the discoveries of new drugs, but often research can prove that existing drugs can be used in different ways or made available to more people.

That's why research funding is such a key part of what we do, as you'll also read in this issue. Your support is what makes that funding possible. So I want to thank you and ask you to continue that support today. If you can, please, please do.

With best wishes,

A stylized, handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to read 'Annwen Jones'.

Annwen Jones OBE, Chief Executive

Have you joined the Ovarian Cancer Community yet?



Set up in summer 2020, the Ovarian Cancer Community has been a vital lifeline for many in these challenging times. Over 1,000 people have come together so far to support each other. And if you've yet to join, now is the perfect time. The community is a special Facebook group that's there for you whether you've been affected by ovarian cancer or you're close to someone who has.



Members of the community get to connect and share their experiences and advice with people who understand what they're going through. It's also a great way to keep in touch with the team at Target Ovarian Cancer, be the first to hear about exciting digital events – and get special updates from clinicians and our specialist nurses too.

**Join the community today.
Simply search
for 'Ovarian Cancer
Community' on Facebook.**



News

Claudia Winkleman to front our BBC Lifeline Appeal

We're excited to announce that Strictly Come Dancing host Claudia Winkleman is hosting a BBC Lifeline Appeal for Target Ovarian Cancer on Sunday 25 July.

Claudia jumped at the chance to help us raise awareness and funds on national TV, and we're incredibly grateful for her support.

We want to spread the news far and wide and get everyone watching, so keep an eye on our website and social media to see what time the appeal will be broadcast. And don't forget to spread the word to your friends and family – we really want to make the most of this incredible opportunity.

See our BBC Lifeline Appeal on Sunday 25 July on BBC Two. Check our website and social media for further updates.

NHS England ovarian cancer audit announced

In a landmark move, NHS England is to fund a national ovarian cancer audit.

This will push forward the improvements we desperately need in England – so more women can access the best treatments and survive ovarian cancer.

This all came together through the combined efforts of Target Ovarian Cancer, the British Gynaecological Cancer Society and Ovarian Cancer Action. Together we funded the **Ovarian Cancer Audit Feasibility Pilot**, which laid bare the postcode lottery women face when it comes to getting effective treatment.

We'll update you on progress in future issues – and we'll continue to push for similar audits in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.



Questions about ovarian cancer?
Call **020 7923 5475**
or visit **targetovariancancer.org.uk/supportline**

Taking on the diagnosis postcode lottery

Getting the right diagnosis, at the right time, could mean that many more women survive.

Thanks to a grant in 2019 from the Peter Sowerby Foundation, we've been leading the charge to address the inequality around diagnosis across the UK.

Currently, there's a huge variation in how early women are diagnosed with ovarian cancer, depending on where they live. And it's costing lives.

Our research uncovered four key issues to address:

- Developing best practice to stop people with symptoms slipping through the net
- Supporting GPs to pick up on the symptoms of ovarian cancer
- Support for GPs in the roll-out of new pathways to diagnosis, such as Rapid Diagnostic Centres
- Helping GPs to use local ovarian cancer data to drive improvement

We're now progressing to working with GPs and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) across England to focus on these areas and develop and test interventions aimed at ending the postcode lottery in early diagnosis.

We'll then share what we've learnt across the country. Thanks to the incredible grant from the Peter Sowerby Foundation, and with your ongoing support, we're determined to end the deadly postcode lottery.

Lena and Savita's story

For Mum – and every other woman with ovarian cancer

My beautiful mum Savita died from ovarian cancer in February. I took her to the GP several times and they suspected lots of different conditions, but not ovarian cancer. Finally she was given a test after we took her to A&E. She was treated successfully, but less than a year later the cancer came back and we lost Mum.

“I want to see more women get an earlier diagnosis, wherever they live in the UK.”

Lena



Target on new treatments

Two new breakthroughs are bringing new hope

In news that will bring joy and hope to everyone affected by ovarian cancer in the UK, two new breakthroughs in treatment have been announced which could help more women live longer.

In two landmark developments, the drug niraparib (Zejula®), and a combination treatment of olaparib (Lynparza®) and bevacizumab (Avastin®), will both be available to those newly diagnosed for the first time. At the moment, the majority of women are diagnosed once their cancer has already spread, making it harder to treat and more likely to come back.

“ This is the biggest breakthrough for newly diagnosed women since the introduction of the chemotherapy drug Taxol in the 1990s. ”

Annwen Jones OBE, Chief Executive of Target Ovarian Cancer



Niraparib isn't a new treatment. It's been used to treat recurrent ovarian cancer for some time. It's a PARP inhibitor, which stops damaged cancer cells from repairing themselves. Accessing niraparib earlier means more people will have a better chance of surviving ovarian cancer from the outset – and fewer families will lose a mother, daughter, partner or sibling.

Similarly, olaparib and bevacizumab have both been used separately to treat women with ovarian cancer. But this is the first time they've been available in combination to those newly diagnosed with advanced high-grade serous ovarian cancer and whose tumour tests positive for homologous recombination deficiency (HRD).

HRD is detected using a new type of genomic testing which will be available to women when they are first diagnosed. This is a big step forward in personalised treatments for ovarian cancer.

With your support, we've been pushing for better access and better drugs for women with ovarian cancer for over a decade. Announcements like these are what make every donation, every minute of research, and all our collective efforts worthwhile. Thank you.

With your support, we'll keep working towards better and newer treatments for ovarian cancer. And together, we'll help save more lives.

Marie's story

Niraparib is already being rolled out to newly diagnosed women in the UK like Marie. And it's making the world of difference.

"I started to notice my symptoms in March 2020. The whole country had gone into lockdown and it was an intensely stressful time. I put the symptoms down to our changing diet. I was eating lots more bread and other carbs now that I was at home.

“It was a really difficult year, but I feel well now.”

Marie

"I was nervous about going to the GP because the NHS was so busy during the pandemic, but she sent me for some tests and in July we found out I had both ovarian and womb cancer.

"The next six months were a blur of treatment – chemotherapy and surgery. Then in January 2021 I started taking new drug niraparib. I feel well now, although it was a really difficult year. I'm looking forward to getting back to normal over the next few months.

"This pandemic can make us all nervous about going to the GP, but our health is so important. Nothing is too small or too silly to mention – just speak up if you're worried because the sooner treatment starts, the better."



If you have any questions about these new treatments speak to your clinical team or call our support line on 020 7923 5475 (9am–5.30pm, Monday–Friday) and speak to one of our specialist nurses.

Research impact

Nine years, ten projects, £1.5m

How we're pushing ovarian cancer research forward, together.

Research is one of the most important aspects of our work. And as our recently published report shows, we've made a big impact in a short time. We aim to help improve survival by funding research that makes existing treatments more effective – while developing new treatments too.

“Target Ovarian Cancer has made real strides in developing UK research for this disease.”

Dr Shibani Nicum, Chair,
National Cancer Research
Institute's Gynaecological Group



With help from donations from people like you, we funded our first research project back in 2012. And we funded an additional research project every year until 2020, when the Covid-19 pandemic forced us to put our research funding on hold. So far we've awarded an incredible £1.5m in funding to the most promising researchers and we're proud that our gold-standard programme is up and running again now.

Already our research has shown that chemotherapy can increase the level of helpful immune cells in and around some tumours. And we're taking a deep dive into newer and more effective treatments for low-grade serous ovarian cancer.

Our research has also led to nine publications being produced on projects ranging from developing new drugs, to making chemotherapy more effective. That means the findings you helped fund are reaching ovarian cancer researchers worldwide and helping to move the global conversation around ovarian cancer research forward.

Funding the future

Each year we receive ten times more top-quality funding applications than we can fund. With your continued support, we will change that. Because every extra project we can fund increases the chances of discovering new ways to test, diagnose and treat ovarian cancer – helping more women to survive.

Thanks so much for the part you've played in helping fund this vital work so far. To read our report in full and find out more about how we choose which projects to fund, visit targetovariancancer.org.uk/fundresearch

Here's to all our fabulous fundraisers

The last year has been a challenging one for many fundraisers. The Covid-19 pandemic has forced many to adapt their plans or put their fundraising on hold temporarily. But despite everything, we've been blown away by the determination we've seen over the last few months.



Angela's bear bonanza

Angela Ruggles was diagnosed with stage III clear cell ovarian cancer in 2017. To mark Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month, Angela crocheted five very special teddies in Target Ovarian Cancer colours, raising an incredible £400 in the process. We think these teddies are brilliant, Angela – and so are you.



The wedding's back on!

If yours was one of the thousands of weddings postponed across the UK during the pandemic, now's the perfect chance to use your new date to fundraise for Target Ovarian Cancer. You can start your new life together while helping save the lives of others.

You can order our wedding favours or create an online celebration page instead of receiving gifts. Find out more at bit.ly/support-us-wedding-day



Jon's marathon year

At just 23, Jon Glover is taking on the fundraising challenge of a lifetime and running a marathon every month in 2021. Inspired by his mum's strength since being diagnosed with ovarian cancer in 2015, he's already raised more than £3,000. Jon told us, "Hopefully by simply putting one foot in front of another I can raise both awareness of this awful disease, and vital funds towards research and desperately needed new treatments."

Steps for women

Amber Curtis was diagnosed with ovarian cancer aged 38. Throughout March she walked 11,000 steps every day to raise money and represent the 11 women who lose their lives to ovarian cancer each day. Amber's amazing friends and family donated almost £3,500 to support her efforts. Amber said, "If I can raise awareness to help people, and maybe save a life, then it will all be worth it!"



Thank you to everyone who's helped raise money and awareness for Target Ovarian Cancer in recent months. To us you're truly wonderful. Find out more about our work and for fundraising inspiration visit targetovariancancer.org.uk/get-involved



Susan Maynard

Remembering Mum

Loretta and Lewis have raised an incredible £15,936 in memory of their mum, Susan. Thank you so much to them and to everyone who came together to remember Susan.

“Target Ovarian Cancer was close to Mum’s heart, so we knew we wanted to do something positive in her memory. We are totally overwhelmed by the amount that has been raised. It’s amazing to know that the money we have raised will help to transform so many other lives.”

Loretta



A lifesaving gift

Could you leave a lifesaving gift?

Thank you, Shirley...

Recently we learned a very special woman named Shirley Morris had lost her life to ovarian cancer in November 2020.

Shirley did something incredible before she died and included a generous gift in her will to Target Ovarian Cancer. Her brother-in-law, Glen, told us. “Shirley wanted to help future women get the support and treatments they need”. Our deepest condolences go out to Glen and the rest of Shirley’s family – along with our heartfelt thanks for her most generous gift.

Protect the next generation of women – and write your will for free.

Writing or amending your will can be much simpler than you might think. And by choosing Guardian Angel to help you, you could even do it for free. Having a will in place is the best way to protect your loved ones.

But after providing for those closest to you, please consider including a gift to Target Ovarian Cancer too.

To find out more about gifts in wills and how you could write your will for free, visit bit.ly/leave-gift-your-will



guardian angel