# Ovarian cancer rates soar in north west England as women urged to prioritise health



Katherine McBride, now 55, is navigating the challenges of a stage four ovarian cancer diagnosis, a journey that began with persistent fatigue she initially attributed to the menopause. Her story serves as a stark reminder of the importance of health vigilance, particularly among women. Katherine's symptoms—including abnormal tiredness and back pain—were too easily dismissed. She confided that when she first started feeling this unusual fatigue, asking for medical help felt unnecessarily indulgent. Despite her hesitations, the reality hit hard when tests confirmed her diagnosis just days after the birth of her first grandchild.

Katherine's experience highlights a broader issue concerning the perception of health concerns among women. As she articulated, many women tend to prioritise the needs of others, often neglecting their own health. She states, “My symptoms could have been easily missed and shrugged off. As a woman, we have a habit of rushing around after everyone else and forgetting about our own health, but it's so important to listen to our bodies and speak to a doctor as soon as possible.” Her words resonate deeply at a time when awareness of ovarian cancer is particularly crucial.

Recent statistics from North West Cancer Research reveal alarming trends in ovarian cancer rates. In the north west of England, these rates are reported to be 17% higher than the national average, with Cumbria facing an even more staggering 41% increase. This regional disparity not only underscores the urgent need for increased awareness but also highlights the socioeconomic factors contributing to these statistics. Historical economic disadvantages in areas like Merseyside and Lancashire are believed to be significant factors in these heightened cancer incidences.

Moreover, ovarian cancer is a leading cause of cancer death among women in the UK, making it the sixth most common cancer type among females. Statistically, it accounts for approximately 5% of female cancer deaths, emphasizing both the severity of the disease and the necessity for timely medical intervention. It is noted that about 7,500 women are diagnosed annually, yet only around 45% of those diagnosed live beyond five years. This makes early detection and continual awareness campaigns vital for improving survival rates.

In terms of treatment options, advancements in targeted therapies have provided new hope for patients like Katherine. She mentioned, "I'm now coming to the end of my latest round of targeted therapy, but the cancer has spread to my lymph nodes." Such developments indicate a shifting landscape in how ovarian cancer is treated, though they highlight the urgent need for more robust research and better resources for patients.

The call for improved awareness surrounding ovarian cancer is critical. As Katherine’s story illustrates, prompt action can potentially lead to earlier diagnoses, which are crucial for a better prognosis. Driven by personal experience, Katherine’s advocacy for health vigilance resonates on multiple levels, revealing not just her resilience but also the shared responsibility among communities to promote health education. Keeping this urgency at the forefront could very well save lives, reinforcing the notion that women, like Katherine, are deserving of the same attention and care they readily give to others.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1: 1
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Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2057614/mum-issues-warning-after-tiredness> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/health-professional/cancer-statistics/statistics-by-cancer-type/ovarian-cancer> - This page from Cancer Research UK provides comprehensive statistics on ovarian cancer, including mortality rates, survival rates, and trends over time. It highlights that ovarian cancer is the sixth most common cause of cancer death in females in the UK, accounting for 5% of all cancer deaths in females. The page also discusses survival rates, noting that more than one in three women diagnosed with ovarian cancer in England survive their disease for ten years or more. Additionally, it covers projections for ovarian cancer mortality rates and discusses variations in mortality rates based on deprivation levels.
3. <https://ovarian.org.uk/ovarian-cancer/ovarian-cancer-statistics/> - Ovarian Cancer Action's statistics page offers key data on ovarian cancer in the UK, including the number of new cases and deaths each year. It states that approximately 7,500 women are diagnosed with ovarian cancer annually, making it the sixth most common cancer in women in the UK. The page also highlights that 45% of those with ovarian cancer survive beyond five years. It emphasizes the importance of early detection and the need for improved research and awareness to change these statistics.
4. <https://www.nwcr.org/about-us/latest-news/2020/lancashire-breaking-the-pattern/> - This article from North West Cancer Research discusses the higher incidence rates of certain cancers in the Lancashire region compared to the rest of England. It notes that bladder cancer affects 18% more people and ovarian cancer rates are 10% higher in Lancashire. The article emphasizes the need to address these disparities through research and awareness campaigns, highlighting the commitment of North West Cancer Research to tackle cancer inequalities in the region.
5. <https://www.wcrf.org/preventing-cancer/cancer-statistics/ovarian-cancer-statistics/page/135/> - The World Cancer Research Fund provides global statistics on ovarian cancer, including incidence and mortality rates. In 2022, the UK had 6,390 new cases of ovarian cancer, with an age-standardized rate of 9.2 per 100,000 women. The page also lists the top countries with the highest rates of ovarian cancer, with Latvia having the highest overall rate in 2022, followed by Samoa. This information underscores the global impact of ovarian cancer and the importance of awareness and early detection.
6. <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/static-reports/health-trends-in-england/North_West/cancer.html> - This report from Public Health England provides data on cancer prevalence in the North West region. It shows an increase in the percentage of patients with cancer recorded on practice disease registers, rising from 2.0% in 2013 to 3.8% in 2024. While the report does not specify ovarian cancer rates, it highlights the growing prevalence of cancer in the region, indicating a need for enhanced awareness and healthcare services to address this trend.
7. <https://www.healthknowledge.org.uk/index.php/public-health-textbook/disease-causation-diagnostic/2b-epidemiology-diseases-phs/cancers/ovarian-cancer> - Health Knowledge provides an overview of ovarian cancer, including its epidemiology, risk factors, and potential protective factors. The article notes that over 85% of cases are diagnosed in women over 50 years old, with the highest incidence rates in women aged over 70. It also mentions that ovarian cancer causes 4,600 deaths in the UK each year, with five-year survival rates for all stages ranging from 25-30%. The article discusses various risk factors, such as age, family history, and genetic mutations, as well as potential protective factors like oral contraceptive use and parity.