13 Cancer of the ovary

Summary

During 1992–1997, relative survival one year after diagnosis of cancer of the ovary was 72.9% and five years after diagnosis was 42.0% (Table 13.1). Relative survival ten years after diagnosis was 33.3% in 1987–1991, the most recent period for which ten-year relative survival data are available (Figure 13.2; Table 13.2).

Relative survival after diagnosis of cancer of the ovary increased significantly between 1982–1986 and 1992–1997. One-year relative survival increased by 8.8 percentage points, five-year relative survival increased by 7.6 percentage points, and seven-year relative survival increased by 6.6 percentage points (Figure 13.2; Table 13.2).

Five-year relative survival after a diagnosis of ovarian cancer was highest in the younger age groups and decreased as age increased. Five-year relative survival was highest for females aged 20–29 years, at 88.9%. Five-year relative survival decreased to 18.1% for females aged 80–89 years and zero for females aged 90–99 years (Figure 13.3; Table 13.1).

For individual age groups, five-year relative survival after diagnosis of cancer of the ovary increased between 1982–1986 and 1992–1997 for females aged from 40–49 years to 70–79 years (Figure 13.3; Table 13.3).

Table 13.1: Cancer of the ovary: number of new cases and deaths, and five-year relative survival proportions, by age at diagnosis, Australia, 1992–1997

Age	New cases	Deaths	5-year relative survival (%)
0–19 years	77	11	85.8
20–29 years	189	21	88.9
30–39 years	345	89	73.9
40–49 years	883	351	59.0
50–59 years	1,344	708	46.8
60–69 years	1,514	999	33.2
70–79 years	1,516	1,154	26.0
80–89 years	665	586	18.1
90–99 years	88	87	0.0
All ages	**6,621**	**4,006**	**42.0**

Incidence and mortality

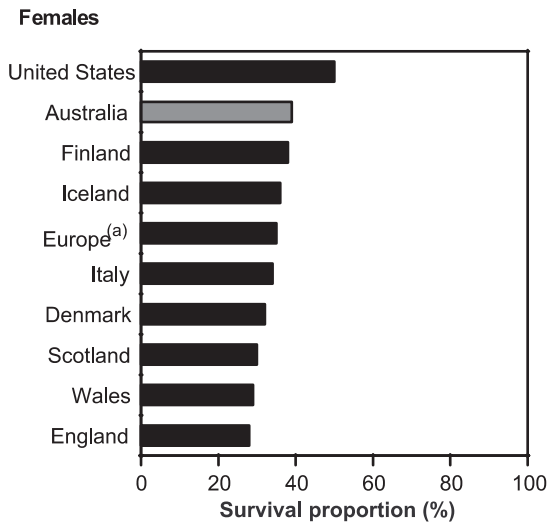
There were 1,150 new cases of cancer of the ovary diagnosed in 1997 and 740 deaths. It is estimated that in 1997 cancer of the ovary was responsible for about 6,200 years of life lost before the age of 75.

Age-standardised incidence and mortality rates for cancer of the ovary remained constant over the six-year period 1992–1997.

International comparisons

International comparison of ovarian cancer five-year relative survival is difficult because of differing coding practices between countries. 'Borderline' malignancies have been included as malignant ovarian neoplasms at different times by different countries (e.g. the United States SEER Program) (Parkin et al. 1992). This has led to higher relative survival estimates in countries such as the United States where 'borderline' ovarian malignancies have been included, when compared with countries such as Australia where they are excluded. Therefore, the following comparisons should be considered with caution.

Relative survival after a diagnosis of cancer of the ovary is low in other western countries for which relative survival data were available. The United States had the highest five-year relative survival proportions from cancer of the ovary—11 percentage points higher than that of Australia. The remaining countries all had similar relative survival proportions, ranging between 28% and 38% (Figure 13.1; Table 13.4).



(a) Weighted average.

Note: The survival period varies among countries, but is broadly within the 1987–1991 period.

Sources: Ries et al. 1999; Coleman et al. 1999; Berrino et al. 1999.

Figure 13.1: Cancer of the ovary five-year relative survival proportions: selected countries

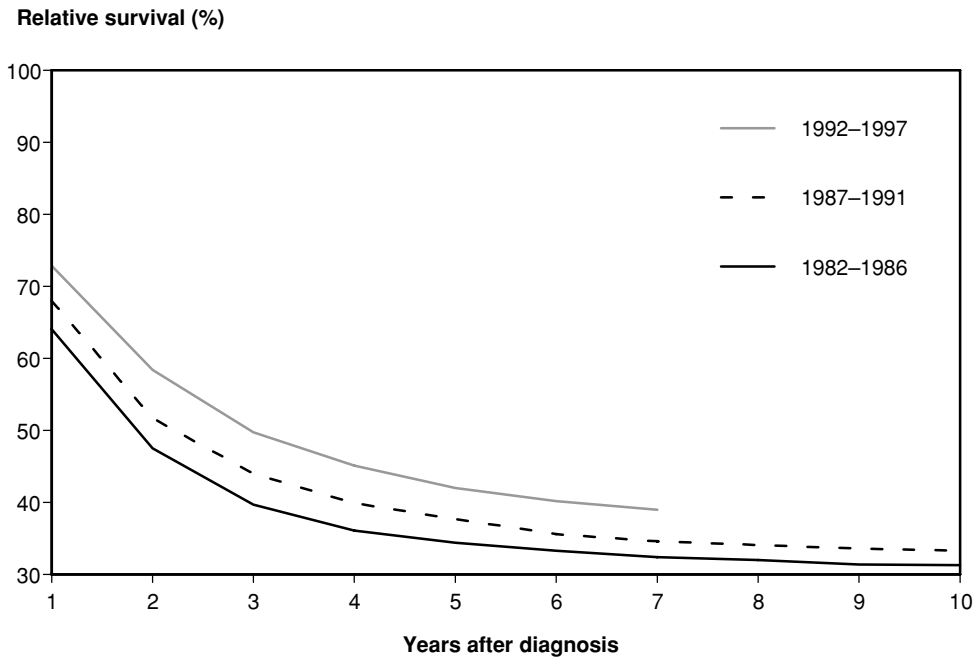
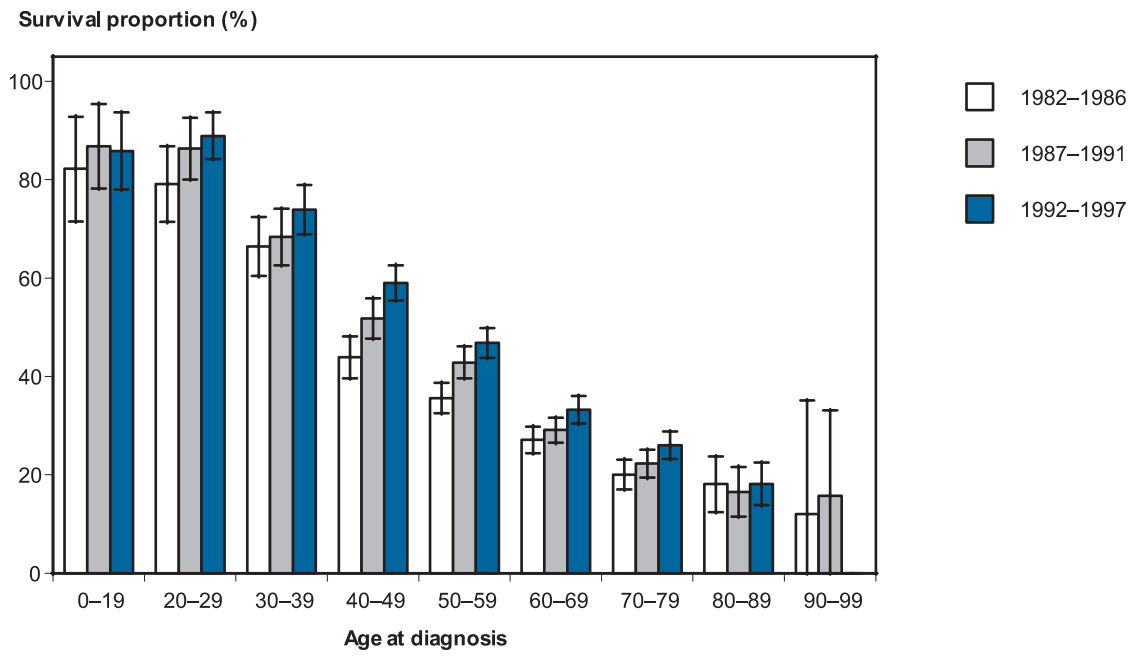


Figure 13.2: Cancer of the ovary relative survival proportions: period of diagnosis, Australia



Note: 95% confidence intervals are shown for each age group.

Figure 13.3: Cancer of the ovary five-year relative survival proportions: age at diagnosis by period of diagnosis, Australia