

Glossary

Ablative therapy: the destruction of cells on the surface of the cervix using laser therapy, chemicals or diathermy.

ABS: Australian Bureau of Statistics.

ACT: Australian Capital Territory—a land-locked Territory of Australia situated within the State of New South Wales on the eastern seaboard with a population of 309,794 (1997). Its capital city is Canberra, which is also Australia's capital city.

Adjuvant: enhancing or administered to enhance the effectiveness of a treatment or substance.

AHMAC: Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council.

AIHW: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

ASGC: Australian Standard Geographical Classification: the classification designed by the ABS to define the geography of Australia.

AS rate: age-standardised rate

Basement membrane: the delicate, noncellular layer on which an epithelium is seated. The epithelium forms the surface portion of the skin and lines hollow organs and all passages of the respiratory, digestive and genito-urinary systems.

Benign: not malignant.

Cancer (malignant neoplasm): a term used to describe one of several diseases which result when the process of cell division, by which tissues normally grow and renew themselves, becomes uncontrolled and leads to the development of malignant cells. These cancer cells multiply in an uncoordinated way, independently of normal growth control mechanisms, to form a tumour. This tumour may expand locally by invasion or systemically by metastasis via the lymphatic or vascular systems. If left untreated most malignant tumours will eventually result in death.

Cancer death: a death where the underlying cause is indicated as cancer. Persons with cancer dying of other causes are not counted in the death statistics in this publication.

CIN (cervical intraepithelial neoplasia): Squamous cell carcinoma of the cervix is mostly preceded, over a period of years, by a spectrum of asymptomatic abnormalities known as cervical intraepithelial neoplasia (CIN) graded as CIN 1 (mild dysplasia), CIN 2 (moderate dysplasia) and CIN 3 (severe dysplasia and carcinoma in situ). CIN usually occurs at least a decade before cervical cancer. If CIN remains untreated, some women will develop cervical cancer. It is difficult to anticipate which cases of CIN will regress or progress although a number of international studies have shown that 1% of CIN 1, 5% of CIN 2 and more than 12% of CIN 3 would progress to invasive cervical cancer (Jelfs 1995).

Colposcopy: a microscopic examination of the lower genital tract with a magnifying instrument called a colposcope. This method of conservative evaluation allows the clinician to more accurately assess the cytologic abnormality by focussing on the areas of greatest cellular abnormality and by sampling them with a punch biopsy to attain diagnosis.

DHAC: Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care (since October 1998) (Department of Health and Ageing since November 2001).

DHFS: Commonwealth Department of Health and Family Services (to October 1998).

DHSH: Commonwealth Department of Human Services and Health (1994-1996).

Epidemiology: the quantitative study of the distribution and determinants of health-related states and events in populations, and the application of this study to the control of health problems.

HGA: high-grade abnormalities - as defined for this report include CIN 1/2, CIN 2, CIN 3 or adenocarcinoma in situ.

Hysterectomy: refers to the surgical procedure whereby all or part of the uterus is removed.

Hysterectomy fractions: the proportion of women who have had their uterus removed by hysterectomy.

HPV: Human papilloma virus.

ICD-9: International Classification of Disease-a coding system used to identify the primary site of the malignancy. This classification is in its ninth revision.

Incidence: see new cancer case

Intraepithelial: refers to that area within the layer of cell tissues forming the epidermis of a body cavity. These cells comprise contiguous cells having minimum intercellular substance.

Invasive cancer: a tumour whose cells have a tendency to invade healthy or normal tissues.

LGA: low-grade abnormalities include atypia, warty atypia (human papilloma virus (HPV) effect), possible CIN, equivocal CIN, CIN 1 or endocervical dysplasia not otherwise specified (NOS).

Lymph node: masses of lymphatic tissue, often bean-shaped, that produce lymphocytes and through which lymph filters. These are located throughout the body.

Metastasis: the process by which a disease is transferred from one part of the body to another, for example, via the lymphatic system or the bloodstream.

Mortality: see cancer death

New cancer case: a person who has a new cancer diagnosed for the first time. One person may have more than one cancer and therefore may be counted twice in incidence statistics if it is decided that the two cancers are not of the same origin. This decision is based on a series of principles set out in more detail in a publication by Jensen et al. (1991).

NOS: Not otherwise specified.

NSW: New South Wales-a State of Australia on the eastern seaboard which has the largest capital city in Australia, Sydney, and a population of 6,274,370 (1997).

NT: Northern Territory-a Territory in the north of Australia with a population of 187,132 (1997) and Darwin as its capital city.

Pap smear: a test prepared for the study of exfoliated cells from the cervix (refer to Appendix A: Cervical cancer: symptoms, detection and treatment).

Post-partum: following childbirth.

Qld: Queensland-a State in the north-east of Australia with a population of 3,401,232 (1997) and Brisbane as its capital city.

Radiation therapy: the treatment of disease with any type of radiation, most commonly with ionising radiation, such as x-rays, beta rays and gamma rays.

RRMA: Rural, Remote and Metropolitan Areas Classification.

SA: South Australia-a State in the southern part of Australia with a population of 1,479,806 (1997) and Adelaide as its capital city.

Screening: the performance of tests on apparently well people in order to detect a medical condition at an earlier stage than would otherwise be the case.

Sensitivity: the proportion of individuals with the disease whom the screening test labels positive.

Stroma: the supporting framework of an organ.

Tas: Tasmania-an island State in the south-east of Australia with a population of 473,501 (1997) and Hobart as its capital city.

Vic: Victoria-a State in the south-east of Australia with a population of 4,605,148 (1997) and Melbourne as its capital city.

WA: Western Australia-the largest State in Australia, located in the west with a population of 1,798,129 (1997) and Perth as its capital city.

