



## Increased risk of death associated with ovary removal during hysterectomy

### Background

- Many premenopausal women have both ovaries removed during hysterectomy to help prevent against developing ovarian cancer, even when there is no particular reason to think it will develop.
- In the UK 1 in 52 women will develop ovarian cancer in their lifetime.
- Removal of ovaries may have harmful effects in the future – these risks must be balanced against the benefit given by protection from ovarian cancer.
- This study used national databases of hospital admissions and of deaths to conduct a nationwide study of associations between removal of ovaries and health outcomes.
- The study can not answer the question of whether, or to what extent, providing women oestrogen replacement may protect against the harmful effects of removing both ovaries.

Removal of all ovarian tissue versus conserving ovarian tissue at time of hysterectomy in premenopausal patients with benign disease: study using routine data and data linkage

## Findings:

- This study looked at the records of 113,679 women who had had a hysterectomy.
- Two groups were compared – 76,581 (67%) women who had at least one ovary remaining, and 37,098 (33%) who had both ovaries removed.
- Patients who kept at least one ovary had significantly lower overall rate of mortality (death) compared to those who had both ovaries removed (0.60% vs. 1.01%). This broadly matches other studies.
- There were also significantly fewer deaths related to heart disease and to cancer in those patients who kept at least one ovary.
- Admissions to hospitals for heart disease and any cancer are also significantly lower in patients who kept at least one ovary.
- However, patients who had both ovaries removed were less likely to have a diagnosis of breast cancer compared to patients who retained at least one ovary. Death rates from breast cancer, however, were not different.

## Reference

Mytton J, Evison F, Chilton PJ, Lilford RJ. Removal of all ovarian tissue versus conserving ovarian tissue at time of hysterectomy in premenopausal patients with benign disease: study using routine data and data linkage. *BMJ*. 2017; 356: j372. [[bmj.com/content/356/bmj.j372](http://bmj.com/content/356/bmj.j372)]



## Recommendations for Practice

While removal of both ovaries does protect against developing ovarian cancer, premenopausal women should be informed that there are also risks involved, including an increased risk of cardiovascular disease, other cancers, and overall mortality.

### What is NIHR CLAHRC West Midlands?

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