

# 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 II (moderate dysplasia) and CIN III (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 while others will progress to invasive cervical cancer, despite treatment (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).

**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.

**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.

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

**Mammogram:** a radiographic depiction of the breast.

**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.

**The Institute:** The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

**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.

# References

- Australian Bureau of Statistics 1993. Estimated resident population by age and sex: Australian States and Territories, June 1987 to June 1992. ABS Cat. No. 3201.0. Canberra: ABS.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics 1997. Estimated resident population by age and sex: Australian States and Territories, June 1992 to June 1997. ABS Cat. No. 3201.0. Canberra: ABS.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics 1998. Estimated resident population by age and sex: Australian States and Territories, June 1997 to June 1998. ABS Cat. No. 3201.0. Canberra: ABS.
- Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council (AHMAC) 1991. Cervical Cancer Screening Evaluation Committee. Cervical cancer screening in Australia: options for change. Australian Institute of Health: Prevention Program Evaluation Series, No. 2. Canberra: AGPS.
- Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council (AHMAC) & Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) 1997. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health information plan...This time, let's make it happen. AIHW Cat. No. HWI 12. Canberra: AIHW.
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) 1998a. Breast and cervical screening in Australia 1996-1997. AIHW Cat. No. CAN 3. Canberra: AIHW (Cancer Series number 8).
- Commonwealth Department of Human Services and Health (DHS) 1994a. Summary of NHMRC guidelines for the management of women with screen-detected abnormalities. Canberra: AGPS.
- Commonwealth Department of Human Services and Health (DHS) 1994b. Screening to prevent cervical cancer: Guidelines for the management of women with screen detected abnormalities. Canberra: AGPS.
- Department of Primary Industries and Energy & Department of Human Services and Health 1994. Rural, remote and metropolitan areas classification. 1991 Census edition. Canberra: AGPS.
- d'Espaignet ET, Measey ML, Condon JR, Jelfs P & Dempsey KE 1996. Cancer in the Northern Territory 1987-1993. Territory Health Services, Darwin.
- Doll R and Smith PG 1982. Comparison between cancer registries: age-standardised rates. In: Waterhouse J, Shanmugaratnam K, Muir C & Powell J (eds). Cancer incidence in five continents, Volume IV. Lyon: International Agency for Research on Cancer.
- Jelfs PL 1995. Cervical cancer in Australia. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare: Cancer Series No. 3, Canberra: AIHW.
- Jensen OM, Parkin DM, Machennan R & Muir C (eds) 1991. Cancer registration: principles and methods. Lyons: International Agency for Research on Cancer.
- Marcus AC & Crane LA 1998. A review of cervical cancer screening intervention research: implications for public health programs and future research. Preventive Medicine 27:13-31.
- McInroe WA, McLean MR, Jones RW & Mullins PR 1984. The invasive potential of carcinoma in situ of the cervix. Obstetric Gynaecology. 64:451-8.
- Ostor AG & Mulvany N 1996. The pathology of cervical neoplasia. Current Opinion in Obstetrics and Gynecology 8:69-73.

Snider JA & Beauvais JE 1998. Pap smear utilization in Canada: estimates after adjusting the eligible population for hysterectomy status. *Chronic Diseases in Canada* 19(1):19-24.

# Related publications

- Anderson GH, Flynn KJ, Hickey LA, Le Riche JC, Maticic JP & Suen KC 1988. Organisation and results for the cervical cytology screening programme in British Columbia, 1955–85. *British Medical Journal* 296:975–8.
- Barratt AL, Cockburn J, Redman S, Paul C & Perkins J 1997. Mammographic screening: results from the 1996 National Breast Health Survey. *Medical Journal of Australia* 167 Nov: 521–4.
- Barrett P & Straton JAY 1996. Cervical cytology registry of Western Australia: 1996 statistical report – WA Cervical Cancer Prevention Program. Perth: Health Department of Western Australia.
- Bell J & Ward J 1998. Cervical screening: linking practice, policy and research in women's health. *Cancer Forum* 22(1):6–11.
- Colditz GA, Hoaglin DC & Berkey CS 1997. Cancer incidence and mortality: the priority of screening frequency and population coverage. *The Milbank Quarterly* 75(2):147–73.
- Commonwealth Department of Health and Family Services (DHSH) 1998. Screening for the prevention of cervical cancer. Canberra: AGPS.
- Department of Health (DHUK) 1997. Statistical bulletin – cervical screening programme, England: 1996–97. UK: Government Statistical Service.
- Duncan AA & Wallis MG 1995. Classifying interval cancers. *Clinical Radiology* 50: 774–7.
- Hennekens CH & Buring J 1987. *Epidemiology in medicine*. Boston, United States: Little, Brown and Company.
- Jelfs P 1998. Using cancer registries to evaluate cancer screening programs. *Cancer Forum* 22(1):3–6.
- Kavanagh AM & Broom DH 1997. Women's understanding of abnormal cervical smear test results: a qualitative interview study. *British Medical Journal* 314:1388–91.
- Mathers C, Penm R, Sanson-Fisher R, Carter R & Campbell E 1998. Health system costs of cancer in Australia 1993–94. Canberra: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Health and Welfare Expenditure Series No. 4.
- Mitchell H & Higgins V 1997. Statistical Report 1996. Carlton South: Victorian Cervical Cytology Registry.
- Sigurdsson KS, Adalsteinsson S & Ragnarsson J 1991. Trends in cervical and breast cancer in Iceland: a statistical evaluation of trends in incidence and mortality for the period 1955–1989, their relation to screening and prediction to the year 2000. *Int J Cancer* 48:523–8.
- Towler BP, Irwig LM & Shelley JM 1993. The adequacy of management of women with CIN 2 and CIN 3 Pap smear abnormalities. *Medical Journal of Australia* 159:523–8.
- Wain G 1999. A brief on re-screening data in NSW by demography.
- Wain G, Ward J & Towler BP 1995. Gynaecological care of women with abnormal Pap smears: how varied is current practice? *Medical Journal of Australia* 162:348–53.