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We've made this magazine with you in mind so tell us you think!

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We are proud to be a member of the Fundraising Regulator. We promise that our fundraising is respectful, open and honest.



Next generation research starts now.

Hello and welcome to our winter edition of *Action* magazine

As you will most likely know, ovarian cancer is a disease that very few people hear about until they – or a loved one – have been diagnosed. For far too long it has remained unrecognised, underfunded and misdiagnosed.

Thanks to supporters like yourself we are already changing this. But to see a truly dramatic improvement in survival rates, we need to reach as many people as possible. And tell them that supporting us is not just about helping the 7,500 women diagnosed each year, but protecting future generations of women too. Women who we hope will never face the same odds as their mothers, aunts and grandmothers. We've launched a new campaign that we hope will do exactly that, and you can read about the incredible woman who made it happen on page 6.

I firmly believe that if we are to create a better future for all women then scientific research is how we will make the biggest impact, and at our Research Awards in October we awarded two new grants for projects that we believe will make a big difference for women. The first grant is for an exciting immunotherapy project led by Professor Ahmed Ahmed. And the second is for BriTROC-2, led by Professor lain McNeish and Dr James Brenton, which aims to create new, personalised treatments for women with ovarian cancer. Find out more on page 4.

We're proud to have invested £12.3million in research since we were founded by Allyson Kaye MBE in 2006, but our history in fact goes back much further. In the mid-80s, Allyson and her family began the HHMT International Forum on Ovarian Cancer. HHMT was

the first conference of its kind to bring international experts together and decide the biggest priorities in ovarian cancer research. In September we hosted our 14th forum here in the UK and you can read about it on page 10.

Every bit of research we fund has one clear objective above all else – that it will directly benefit women with ovarian cancer. And your support makes this possible. So on behalf of everyone at Ovarian Cancer Action and our dedicated scientists, I would like to thank you. Together we can accelerate the rate of progress. For women today and for generations to come.







News in brief.

All the latest news from the Ovarian Cancer Action team



RESEARCH AWARDS 2019

In October we held our
Research Awards evening.
Hosted by our CEO Cary
Wakefield, we announced our
two new research projects
and heard updates from
our on-going research. Our
Patron, actor Gwyneth Strong
presented our very first
Supporter Awards and special
guest Rosa Hesmondhalgh,
star of Madame Ovary, put on
a show-stopping performance
ahead of her London tour dates.

£600,000 was awarded to Professor Ahmed Ahmed for his innovative immunotherapy project. Sometimes called targeted therapy, immunotherapy is a new and highly effective treatment that turns the body's own immune system against cancer.

We awarded a further £295.000 to BriTROC-2. a nationwide research project whose goal is to help personalise and create new treatments for women with high grade serous ovarian cancer (HGSOC). BriTROC-2 will build on the exciting discoveries made by the pioneering BriTROC-1, which joined together 14 research centres around the UK to study changes in the HGSOC genome over time using tumour samples donated by ovarian cancer patients.

The first BriTROC project discovered that one of seven unique 'signatures' was being written into ovarian cancer's DNA as it evolved over time. Each genetic signature offers a vital clue about why ovarian cancers behave in different ways – why some respond well to treatment while others become resistant to it.



2019 SUPPORTER AWARDS WINNERS

Innovation in Fundraising
Mr Richard Emyr Wigley

Group Fundraiser of the Year
Pine Cone Walkers

Young Fundraiser of the Year Kelsey Roberts

Outstanding Achievement Award

Florence Wilks

Over the next four years the BriTROC-2 team, led by Prof lain McNeish and Dr James Brenton, will analyse a new set of samples, untangle the genetic differences within ovarian cancer, and map out where and when treatment should be tailored. By making genetic sense of a complex disease, BriTROC-2 will help doctors choose the best treatments for their patients. To find out more about our research visit ovarian.org.uk/research

IN THE NEWS: OLAPARIB

Olaparib, also known as Lynparza, has been made more readily available to women diagnosed with BRCA-mutated ovarian cancer. As a maintenance treatment, the drug doesn't cure ovarian cancer but it does prevent its progression. By delaying the spread of the disease, women can feel better and live healthier lives for longer. Previously, the treatment was only available to patients with BRCA-mutated ovarian cancer who had undergone three or more courses of platinum-based chemotherapy with sufficient progression-free intervals in-between. Now it is available straight after first-line chemotherapy – which really is great news.

Ovarian Cancer Action ambassador Florence Wilks played a vital role in the NICE committee's decision to approve olaparib as a first-line maintenance treatment by helping the committee panel understand the impact olaparib has had on her life. When the story broke she was interviewed on BBC Breakfast, the Victoria Derbyshire show on BB2, as well as ITV and Sky news.





RAISING AWARENESS: WE'RE IN THIS TOGETHER

We've teamed up with Ovacome, The Eve Appeal and BRCA Umbrella to raise awareness of hereditary cancers and let people know that BRCA testing is available. We have sent information posters to 1,100 GP surgeries across the UK, but we need your help to ensure that we reach as many people as possible. Around 15% of ovarian cancers are caused by inherited genetic faults such as BRCA1/2, but we know 7 in 10 people in the UK have never heard of them.

TAKE ACTION

Could you help us? If you are able to drop off an awareness pack with your local GP surgery, including symptom awareness posters as well as hereditary cancer risk information, we would love to hear from you. Please email info@ovarian.org.uk



I will survive.

Our new campaign, voiced by Kate Winslet, has the next generation at the heart of it. Its message is clear – we must invest in the next generation of research today if the next generation of girls are to benefit from the results in the future.

For too long, ovarian cancer has remained unrecognised, underfunded and misdiagnosed. At Ovarian Cancer Action, we want to put it in the spotlight and keep it there. Which is why we've launched a powerful new campaign to tell others what you already know – that funding research is the only way to ensure ovarian cancer becomes a much more survivable disease. Although five-year

survival rates for ovarian cancer are improving, other cancers, such as breast cancer, had better survival rates two generations ago than ovarian cancer does today. So our campaign has the next generation at its heart.

THE CAMPAIGN

'I Will Survive' is the biggest media campaign OCA has run since we started life more than a decade ago. Our film features a group of girls speaking the lyrics of the famous Gloria Gaynor anthem straight to camera, each one showing us she is determined she will survive. The girls' natural optimism, spontaneity and strength are set against the plain truth that this will only happen if we take action now. Voiced by Oscar-winning actress Kate Winslet, and with music from singer-songwriter Birdy, we hope

that our campaign will help put ovarian cancer in the spotlight like never before.

Kate Winslet says, "Having lost our mum to ovarian cancer in 2017, as a family we have first-hand experience of the awful loss that comes with this terrible disease. Early screening and further research is invaluable. Raising awareness as well as funds becomes immediately empowering to women and girls, whilst at the same time giving genuine hope for a brighter future and cancer free lives."

HOW YOU CAN HELP

There's never been a more hopeful time to invest in ovarian cancer

"We hope our campaign will put ovarian cancer in the spotlight like never before"

research. Great progress is being made each year, with personalised treatments now becoming a reality. This is due to the fruition of gene mutation research undertaken in the early 90s and to the new generation of immunotherapy treatments now showing promise in early trials.

We're funding the next generation of research so that girls today will face much better prospects than their mothers, aunts and grandmothers. With more support, we can accelerate the rate of progress for women today and for the next generation.

TAKE ACTION

Help us get the word out! Visit ovarian.org.uk/nextgen – or find us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram – to watch the film and share it with everone you know.

One woman's vision

Pip Bishop and Chris Hodgkiss, the creative minds behind 'I Will Survive', introduce their friend VJ – the campaign's inspiration and driving force.

Meet VJ. AKA Vicky Jacobs. Our old advertising colleague and dear friend. The extraordinary woman whose vision and dogged determination brought this campaign to fruition.

When VJ was diagnosed with ovarian cancer six years ago, her prognosis was pretty bleak. But VJ took on her disease with the same intelligence, passion, boundless energy and humour as she did everything in life. When her first round of treatment didn't work, she went to Switzerland for experimental immunotherapy in

2016, which gave

family and friends.

her three years of good health. She didn't waste it. In those three years she climbed sand dunes in Namibia, joined evening prayers in Varanasi, partied under a full moon in Tulum, visited friends in New Zealand, San Fran, Moscow and Spain, attended six weddings, numerous milestone birthdays and celebrations with

When the disease returned, she made it her mission to change the survival odds for the next generation. This was typical VJ, selflessly making something good out of a tragic situation.

She knew it was too late for her, but saw research as the answer for the future. When Cary Wakefield joined Ovarian Cancer Action as CEO, VJ spotted her opportunity, as they'd worked together at the BBC. She had an idea about making a pledge for the next generation and the powerful campaign you see now all came from her initial vision.

It was very difficult to say no to VJ, whether it was another glass of red, an impromptu karaoke session or a project as important as this one. She quickly got Emily James (another ex colleague)

onboard as strategist and persuaded us to develop the creative idea. We

the creative idea. We then embarked on the herculean task of persuading the great and the good of the advertising world to help us make it happen.

The respect VJ earned

through her years in the industry paid off and we were overwhelmed and humbled when people flocked to offer their help.

And through it all, VJ was there in the wings, keeping the vision alive. And bossing us all about in her own inimitable way.

This was her way of making sure something positive came out of her diagnosis, channeling her energy into trying to make it better for the next generation. We think it eased her pain to think that Ovarian Cancer Action might solve the ovarian cancer crisis in a generation because of this campaign. And this is her legacy.



It was 2006 when our now President, Allyson Kaye MBE, set up the charity to raise awareness of an overlooked and underfunded disease. She was determined to ensure it got the attention it deserved. But HMMT came first, twenty years before that.

The first Helene Harris Memorial Trust (HHMT) International Forum on Ovarian Cancer took place in 1986, not long after Helene Harris was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. Determined to find the best possible treatment options, Helene and her husband John travelled to New York, where they were surprised to learn that the UK and US had very different approaches to treatment. Despite their best efforts, within a few months of that visit, ovarian cancer sadly claimed Helene's life. In her memory, her family set up the HHMT Forum to ensure global experts continue to work together. Since then, the world's leading ovarian cancer experts have met every four years to discuss and debate what we need to do to make ovarian cancer a survivable disease. We believe by collaborating on an international scale, we will reach our goals quicker.

Our latest HHMT Forum took place in September, right here in the UK. The theme was immunotherapy,

a promising new treatment that is already being used to treat advanced melanoma and kidney cancer to great effect. Unfortunately, immunotherapy is currently unavailable for ovarian cancer — but we want to change that. Experts were challenged to think about how we can ensure that immunotherapies will also change the lives and prospects of women with ovarian cancer.

OUR IMMUNOTHERAPY CHALLENGE

Having identified immunotherapy as a key area of focus for the international ovarian cancer community, we

"Our latest HHMT forum took place here in the UK. The theme was immunotherapy."

THE HHMT FORUM HAS FIVE KEY AIMS:

Share knowledge: to bring together the best researchers from around the world to discuss developments and share their most recent work.

2 Foster collaboration: to encourage experts to work together across international borders.

3 Chart the way ahead: to plan strategies to accelerate progress in research into ovarian cancer.

4 Educate the next generation: to ensure young and established researchers are tuned into the latest scientific thinking and directions.

5 By doing all of the above, we hope to achieve our most fundamental goal: to make ovarian cancer a survivable disease.

know that research is the only way we can bring this treatment to patients sooner. Back in September 2018 we announced our Immunotherapy Challenge, offering up to £600,000 to the best research project that will improve outcomes and transform treatment for women with ovarian cancer. We had 21 applications, and the final five shortlisted projects were presented at HHMT.

We are delighted to announce that we have awarded the full £600,000 to Professor Ahmed Ahmed at the Weatherall Institute of Molecular Medicine at the University of Oxford. His proposal made it through a rigorous vetting process, first by our specially put together Immunotherapy Challenge Panel, then our international and independent Scientific Advisory Board before the decision was made.

Professor Ahmed's work plans to focus on the relationship between the body's immune system, which detects faulty cells, and the mutated (cancerous) cells that try to hide from it. The more we understand this relationship, it is possible we can learn how to boost the immune system to be more effective in tackling cancer itself.

Professor Ahmed, says, "Thank you very much for your kindness and generosity. We hope that with the help of this grant that we will be able to generate kinder and more effective therapeutic options for patients with ovarian cancer."

INFORMING THE NEXT GENERATION

In the coming months we will publish an agenda-setting paper on immunotherapy and ovarian cancer, from insights shared at HHMT. The paper will inform, educate and inspire scientists working in the field of ovarian cancer. Research is challenging and takes time, but we believe that it is through international collaboration, rather than working in isolated pockets, that we stand the



best chance of accelerating progress and making ovarian cancer a survivable disease.

When you make a donation to Ovarian Cancer Action, you are funding research projects born from ideas shared at HHMT, reviewed by our international and independent Scientific Advisory Board and most importantly, reviewed by you.

TAKE ACTION

Our Ovarian Cancer Action Research Network is a nationwide, virtual group of people affected by ovarian cancer who use their experience of the disease to help shape ovarian cancer research. Examples of opportunities include:

- Sharing your perspective as someone who has experienced ovarian cancer
- Joining committees or steering groups as patient representatives
- Reviewing the funding applications we receive
- Working with researchers to help develop research projects

Many of these can be done from the comfort of your own home though others may require travel. It's completely up to you to choose how much you would like to do. To find out more, visit: ovarian.org.uk/research-network

roaring success Nancy and Azerley Keller organised a show-stopping performance of song, music, dance and poetry in memory of their beloved aunt, Nancy Keller, who died of ovarian cancer in March 2019. Nancy Keller, 19, tells us her story.

My Aunt Nancy was a hard-working nurse who was also chilled out, stylish, and an amazing interior designer and curry maker. Her vegetarian curry is legendary in our house. We used to go out and do fun things together like shopping. She passed away from ovarian cancer earlier this year.

My sister Azerley, who attends
Tring Park School for Performing Arts
(whose alumni includes Dame Julie
Andrews) decided to gather
her talented friends to
put on a show to raise
money for Ovarian
Cancer Action in

memory of our aunt.
Even though we knew it would be a big challenge, my mum and I said

my mum and I said we would commit to help organising this. It wasn't always easy

because Azerley is away near London and we are up here near the Lake District but we worked hard to make the event a success.

This was the best way we could think of, not only to raise money for ovarian cancer research in memory of my aunt, but also to use song, music, dance and poetry to evoke happy memories for anyone attending of any loved ones. In organising this show we wanted to raise awareness of the symptoms of the disease too.

"I like to think that Aunt Nancy would have liked the idea of something like this"

A FULL HOUSE

NANCY KELLER

The event was a roaring success. We had a full house on both nights (with people even sitting on the stairs!) We also gave out symptom awareness cards and in total we raised almost £4,000. It has been an amazing experience and I like to think that Aunt Nancy would have liked the idea of something like this that raises money for cancer whilst being a fun night.

NEXT GENERATION RESEARCH

Investing in research is important to us, as a family. I think the impact will be massive.

Medical research can appear to be making very small incremental steps but at some stage there is a significant breakthrough

due to all the tiny steps. So you have to keep going at it with faith and science steering you on the right course. I want to be part of that too, in my future career.

At first I wanted to be a scientist and then I realised I would only be fulfilled working with people. My particular interest was, even before this, in cancer, and this was strengthened by what my aunt had been through. It made me want to be there to support and care for people with cancer, as a doctor. The more we work together to help find better treatments for cancer, the sooner they will become a reality.

TAKE ACTION

Would you like to share your story? Email Tori@ovarian.org.uk or call 020 7380 1730

Feeling inspired?

Find a way to fundraise that's as unique as you

Overcoming ovarian cancer is about working together, and holding your own event is a brilliant way to raise money to help fund the next generation of research.

Your fundraising will make a real difference to the thousands of sisters, mothers, friends and daughters affected by ovarian cancer each year.

You could bake up a storm, host a party, get quizzical, take on a challenge or get crafting. It's all about doing your own thing. And we'll be with you every step of the way - from giving you advice, to sending you materials to make your event or activity a success. Whether you have an idea in mind, or need some help finding the perfect fundraising activity for you, we'd love to hear from you!

To request your free fundraising pack email fundraising@ovarian. org.uk or call us on 020 7380 1730.

Here's to you!

From raising the vital funds that we invest in research to volunteering your time, you make our work possible.

Thanks to you we are able to fund more research into preventing ovarian cancer, creating better treatments for patients, and developing the world's first ovarian cancer screening tool. Here are some of your recent fundraising stories.



IN MEMORY OF EVELYN

Richard Emyr Wigley, a farmer in Llansantffraid, lost his wife Evelyn to ovarian cancer in 2015. He's been fundraising in her memory by raising a very rare breed of cows called Old Stackyard British Blues. His fundraising total has already exceeded a staggering £40,000! Before her death Evelyn had her own small herd of British Blues, which she and Emyr ran alongside their 120 dairy cows.

Emyr, says, "I had to do something in her memory. She was a very special lady – kind, caring and multi-talented – and after a lifetime of work the majority of her retirement years were stolen from her. It's too late to help Evelyn but helping fight against this disease gives me some satisfaction and is a tribute to my wife."

STRONGER TOGETHER

We couldn't do what we do without the help of our dedicated volunteers. From cheering at marathons to helping in the office and giving awareness talks, our volunteers are a vital part of our team. Meet some of the incredible people taking action behind the scenes.

KIM GRAY

For World Ovarian
Cancer Day last year we
handed out 33,000 roses
across the country – one
for each women living
with ovarian cancer in
the UK. It was a huge
task and wouldn't have
been possible without
volunteers like Kim, who
helped coordinate our
volunteers and handed
out roses herself.

Kim has also helped us review the content for our new online Patient Hub to make sure it is useful for women with ovarian cancer, and made countless calls to GPs to check they had received the BRCA awareness packs we had been sending out to them.

JOHN LYNCH

Raising awareness of ovarian cancer remains one of our top priorities and thanks to John we can do so much more than we could alone. He has sent out hundreds of awareness packs from our office and he travels across the UK to deliver awareness talks. John started giving talks for Ovarian **Cancer Awareness** Month last March and he hasn't stopped!

John also handed out roses to raise awareness for World Ovarian Cancer Day, and even convinced his new-found friends from around the country to do the same.





COULD OVARIAN CANCER ACTION BE YOUR NEXT CHARITY PARTNER?

A powerful way that vou can create a better outcome for women is through your employer. Many companies have a charity of the year programme, raising both awareness and much needed funds for their chosen charity. If your company has a charity of the year programme, why not nominate Ovarian Cancer Action? And if it doesn't exist yet, why not take the opportunity to start one? For more information contact Roxanne.Langlois @ovarian.org.uk or call 020 7380 1742.



FUNDING RESEARCH

Florence Wilks was diagnosed with advanced ovarian cancer in 2010 and told she had just 12-18 months to live. She has since had ovarian cancer four times and undergone numerous surgeries and rounds of chemotherapy with brief bouts of remission between.

Since her initial diagnosis, Florence has been tirelessly fundraising and has raised more than £42,000 for the Ovarian Cancer Action Research Centre at Hammersmith Hospital where she's being treated. Florence completes one fundraising project a year, ranging from creating a diary and an art exhibition to having a poetry book published.

TAKE ACTION

Would you like to be a fundraising superstar and take action to help women survive ovarian cancer? To order your free fundraising pack email fundraising@ovarian.org.uk or call 020 7380 1730

CLIMBING SNOWDON

Kelsey was diagnosed with stage 3 ovarian cancer at 19 years old and has raised thousands of pounds for OCA through bake sales, Walk in Her Name (our sponsored walk) and climbing Snowdon with friends and family. Kelsey says, "Raising money for this charity is the best thing I've ever done – you can't beat the feeling that you get when you know that you're helping fund vital research into ovarian cancer."



WALKING IN HER NAME

When Grant lost his wife, Barbara, in 2010, he and his daughter wanted to do something to support an ovarian cancer charity in her memory. Since 2010 he and his friends have been going on sponsored walks in her name. Known as the Pine Cone Walkers, their first walk raised £500 and Grant and his daughter travelled to the OCA's very first office to present the donation to the team. They've continued supporting the charity ever since. Since they lost Barbara, colleagues and other friends have also been affected by ovarian cancer so the cause means a lot to them all. They're always surprised and grateful to all the people that see them in their teal T-shirts when they're on their walks and give them donations in their collection bucket. To date they have completed 40 walks and raised an amazing £26,752.82.

Five minutes with...

Rosa Hesmondhalgh aka Madame Ovary

Rosa Hesmondhalgh is the star of her one-woman show, Madame Ovary. She shot to fame when her honest, thoughtful and entertaining depiction of being a twenty-something woman diagnosed with ovarian cancer took Edinburgh Fringe by storm this summer. Now she is performing in London, raising awareness of ovarian cancer one sold-out audience at a time. She took time out of her busy schedule to answer some questions and tell us more about herself.

THE SERIOUS STUFF How did you put together the incredible show for the Edinburgh Fringe?

I couldn't have done it without the help of my amazing director and collaborator Adam Small. I wrote a few rubbish drafts, sent them to him and some amazing trusted friends and family, and kept editing, editing. editing. Then I spent about three weeks playing and getting it on its feet! It was hard but one of the most gratifying things I've ever done.



Who was your biggest role model growing up?

My auntie Julie Hesmondhalgh (known for her role as Hayley Cropper in the ITV soap *Coronation Street*). She still is today, maybe even more so.

What is your biggest success?

Taking Madame Ovary to Edinburgh a year after finishing cancer treatment felt amazing.

And biggest failure?

Losing my Nintendo DS in Fuerte Ventura in 2004.

If you could give one piece of advice, woman to woman, what would it be?

Wear the bright lipstick. Wear the mad shoes.

What keeps you motivated when times are tough?

My WhatsApp group with my best friends. Vine compilations. The 'Two Shot Podcast' with Craig Parkinson.

THE SILLIER STUFF

Guilty pleasure: I don't feel an ounce of guilt about experiencing pleasure anymore. But I am hesitant to share how much I love Storage Hunters on Dave.

Book: On Beauty by Zadie Smith.

Shop: The charity shops in Crouch End are genuinely the best.

Film: It's A Wonderful Life.

Food: My Mum's Christmas dinner.

Holiday destination:

The north eastern seaside town Whitby, in early September, eating chips by the sea with my family.

Relax/unwind:

Drinking wine with my best friends Rhi, Grace and Teb.

Plans for 2020:

Thinking about taking Madame Ovary to see some other cool cities!



Dates for your diary

From running a marathon to handing out roses, find out how you can support Ovarian Cancer Action over the next year...

Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month

1-31 March 2020

March is the most important month in our calendar. We need your help to raise awareness of the symptoms of ovarian cancer and raise the profile of the disease.



World Ovarian Cancer Day

8 May 2020

Following on from successful campaigns, we will be back in 2020 to hand out more white roses across the UK. Last year we even had the Prime Minister wearing one in parliament!

Ride the Night

23-24 May 2020

Back for the seventh year, Ride the Night is moving to the Lee Valley VeloPark and has the new option of a 50km ride. Over the last six years, thousands of inspiring women have raised over £6 million for Ovarian Cancer Action and the two other charities: Breast Cancer Now and Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust.

Vitality 10,000

25 May 2020

A fun and family-friendly 10km run through the capital passing famous landmarks, before finishing outside Buckingham Palace. Grab some friends and join Team OCA for this lovely event.

Prudential Ride London

2 August 2020

The Prudential Ride London is Britain's biggest celebration of cycling. This unique challenge will take you on a 100-mile route on closed roads through the capital and into Surrey's stunning countryside.



TAKE ACTION

Want to be the first to hear about all of our events and the latest Ovarian Cancer Action news? Sign up to our monthly e-newsletter by visiting ovarian.org.uk/stayintouch or email Info@ovarian.org.uk



Royal Parks Half

October 2020

Starting and finishing in the stunning Hyde Park, join 16,000 runners on a 13.1 mile route through Central London, taking in the spectacular sites of the capital and its beautiful Royal Parks.

Skydive

Whenever you like!

Experience the unforgettable feeling of flying through the clouds at 120mph with a sponsored skydive. You pick the date and we'll take care of the plans.

To find out more about any of our events or to register, visit ovarian.org.uk/challenges



8-12 Camden High Street, London NW1 0JH

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