

Newsletter - December 2022

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

The Million Women Study is one of the UK's longest running health research studies. Between 1996 and 2001, the study recruited 1.3 million women, aged 50–64, through NHS Breast Screening Centres. In 2021 we reached our 25th anniversary – celebrating a quarter of a century of research into women's health. We are grateful for the continued support from our study participants and our collaborators. Every participant is important to us. Your participation in the study has already allowed us to provide definitive evidence regarding the role of many common risk factors for cancer and other chronic diseases, and we continue to investigate known and emerging risk factors for diseases which are relevant to women in our cohort.

PROFESSOR DAME VALERIE BERAL (1946-2022)

With great sadness, we announce that Dame Professor Valerie Beral, the founder of the Million Women Study, died peacefully on 26th August 2022.



Professor Beral was a talented epidemiologist who generated much of the world's best evidence on hormonal factors and female cancers. By combining data from relevant studies worldwide (including the Million Women Study) she provided reliable information about the health risks and benefits associated with oral contraceptive and HRT use. She also carried out research into modifiable risk factors for cardiovascular disease, fracture, and dementia. Read her obituary [here](#).

STUDY PROGRESS

We are pleased to confirm continued funding from Cancer Research UK for our work on prevention and risk stratification for cancer. As part of this work, we are

investigating whether digital mammography and other breast screening data can provide valuable information about a woman's subsequent risk of breast cancer.

STUDY PUBLICATIONS

A full list of study publications can be found here, but we have highlighted a number of key findings.

Our research on 'Survival after Ovarian Cancer' revealed that even after accounting for stage, grade and tumour histology remain important predictors of survival. The findings also suggest that greater body mass index and smoking may be associated with poorer survival (Gaitskell et al, Cancer Epidemiology 2022).

<https://www.ceu.ox.ac.uk/publications/1226104>

From our research on social isolation and health, we have found that women who were more socially isolated were not more likely to develop heart disease or stroke than those who were less isolated, but they had a higher risk of dying from heart attack or stroke before reaching hospital (Smith et al, The Lancet Public Health 2021).

<https://www.ceu.ox.ac.uk/publications/1151025>

Our research 'Body size in early life and post-menopausal breast cancer' showed that women who reported having greater adiposity in early life, and particularly in childhood, have a lower risk of postmenopausal breast cancer. This apparent reduction in risk was evident for all the main subtypes of breast cancer.

(Yang et al, BMC Cancer 2022)

<https://bmccancer.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12885-022-09233-9>

Our publication "Cellular Telephone Use and the Risk of Brain Tumours: Update of the UK Million Women Study" found that neither daily mobile phone use, nor use for 10 or more years, was associated with increased risk of brain tumours overall, by brain tumour subtype or its location. (Schüz et al, Journal of the National Cancer Institute 2022) <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35350069/> During the COVID-19 pandemic, we also took the opportunity to carry out an online survey of the impact of the pandemic on participants' health and well-being. Over 44,500 women took part and we hope to make the findings available in due course.