

Australian Ovarian Cancer Study (AOCS): A multidisciplinary ovarian cancer resource for the genomics era

1. Contact Details

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2. Description of facility/activity

The Australian Ovarian Cancer Study (AOCS) is a unique resource for ovarian cancer research, involving thousands of biospecimens and linked epidemiological and clinical data.

Ovarian cancer cases are identified through a national network of gynaecological oncologists and research nurses based at 21 major treatment centres across the country, Consenting cases are given a study questionnaire and a modified dietary questionnaire that elicits information on medical, reproductive, behavioural and environmental factors.

Biospecimens (blood, urine and fresh frozen tissue samples) are collected by research nurses and sent to the Biospecimen Core for processing. Study nurses at each participating centre are responsible for the completion of standardized case report forms to collect clinical data on each patient at specified intervals, in consultation with gynaecological and medical oncologists where necessary. Diagnostic slides and pathology reports are retrieved for central pathology review by a group of expert gynaecological pathologists led by Prof Peter Russell (CI), to confirm histological subtype, tumour behaviour (low malignant potential (LMP) or invasive), grade (using standardised criteria), primary site and to exclude any women found to have non-epithelial or benign ovarian tumours. Potential controls are selected at random from the Commonwealth electoral roll to match the age and geographic distribution of the cases. Blood samples are obtained and questionnaires for control women are essentially identical to that collected for cases.

The AOCS Access Committee currently allows use of the material by researchers for ethically approved, peer-reviewed studies. The Access Policy is available on the AOCS website.