What is ovarian cancer?
Ovarian cancer is a cancer that occurs in the ovaries. About 85-90% of ovarian cancers are epithelial ovarian carcinomas, which originate in the epithelial cells that cover the outer surface of the ovaries.1,2

Incidence
Ovarian cancer is uncommon. Each year, there are approximately 22,000 new cases of ovarian cancer diagnosed in the U.S.3 and 44,149 cases diagnosed in the E.U.4

Risk factors1,2
- Older age
- Obesity
- Having a first baby later in life (>age 35) or never carrying a pregnancy to term
- Young age at first menstrual period
- Late menopause
- Family history of ovarian, breast or colorectal cancer
- Having an inherited cancer syndrome, such as hereditary breast and ovarian cancer syndrome (i.e., BRCA1 or BRCA2 mutation)
- Personal history of breast cancer

Symptoms
Ovarian cancer can be difficult to detect, particularly at early stages when there might be few or no symptoms.2 Symptoms can also be vague or non-specific, making it easy to confuse them with less serious conditions.1,5 Some of the more common symptoms of ovarian cancer include:1,2,5
- Bloating
- Loss of appetite
- Feeling of fullness
- Pain in the pelvis or abdomen
- Urinary urgency or frequency
- Fatigue
- Constipation or diarrhea
- Vaginal bleeding

Diagnosis and prognosis
About half of all ovarian cancers are diagnosed in women age 63 and older.1,3 Ovarian cancer is most frequently diagnosed when it has already metastasized to other parts of the body that are not near the original cancer.3 For patients in the U.S. with metastatic disease, the 5-year survival rate is about 27%.3

Current treatment options for ovarian cancer may include: 2,6,7
- Surgery
- Chemotherapy
- Radiation therapy
- Targeted therapies

Need for further research
Despite advances in the field of ovarian cancer, the prognosis remains poor for the majority of patients, who are typically diagnosed with advanced-stage disease.2 There is a clear unmet medical need for new treatment options.
References