

Overdiagnosis of cancer

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Cancer, which is a fatal disease occurs when cellular changes cause abnormal growth and division of cells. These abnormal groups of cells form cancer that result in visible growths called tumours while some forms of cancer, such as leukaemia do not result in visible growths. The stage when cancer spreads to the other locations in the body is called metastasis and most cancer deaths are due to this metastatised stage that occurs through the blood or the lymphatic system or both. To control or eliminate this, people with suspected cancer are investigated with many medical tests, such as blood tests, x-rays, CT scans, endoscopy, tissue diagnosis, etc. These screening methods do help in controlling cancer but sometimes result in overdiagnosis. Treating cancers that do not necessarily cause harm with intensive diagnosis and cancer drugs might cause a negative impact on the person's quality of life. Overdiagnosis of cancer has become an issue owing to its risks and has been receiving more attention; for instance, x-rays overdose can enhance cancer or can provide cancer to a new area which might deteriorate the condition of a person. It has been reported that many people who were suffering from acute cancer are now suffering from chronic cancers, which are leading to deaths by almost 25 percent. Diagnosing cancers early is important because when cancer is found at an earlier stage, it gets easier to treat. Therefore, it is important that researchers consider not only how to find cancer earlier but also how to reduce overdiagnosis risk by ensuring picking up the cancers that need actual treatment. In addition, improvements in personalised treatment in the future might also reduce the harms of overdiagnosis and overtreatment.

Keywords: Biopsy, Metastasis, Tumour, Cancer, Overdiagnosis, Overdosing, Overtreatment

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