Press Release

Ovarian cancer symptoms not apparent until later stages

- It is the eighth most common cancer in women
- Lifestyle changes can help reduce risk

New Delhi, 18 September, 2017: Of all cancers in women, ovarian cancer is the eighth most common cancer and ranks fifth in terms of mortality, according to statistics. About two-thirds of those with this condition stand at an advanced stage of the disease during diagnosis and less than 50% survive longer than five years after being diagnosed. As per the IMA, the primary reason for reaching the advanced stage and eventual death is that in many women with this disease, there are no symptoms.

Ovarian cancer refers to any cancerous growth in the ovary. A majority of ovarian cancers arise from the epithelium (outer lining) of the ovary. The most common ovarian cancers are called epithelial ovarian cancers (EOC) and other types include ovarian low malignant potential tumor (OLMPT), germ cell tumors, and sex cord-stromal tumors.

Speaking about this, Padma Shri Awardee Dr K K Aggarwal, National President Indian Medical Association (IMA) and President Heart Care Foundation of India (HCFI) and Dr RN Tandon – Honorary Secretary General IMA in a joint statement, said, "Ovarian cancer often goes undetected until it spreads within the pelvis and stomach. In such an advanced stage, it may not be possible to treat the condition making it life threatening. Often, this condition has no symptoms in the early stages and even at a later stage; there are non-specific symptoms such as loss of appetite and weight loss. Mutations in BRCA1 and BRCA2 are responsible for most inherited ovarian cancers. When these genes are normal, they help prevent cancer by making proteins that keep cells from growing abnormally. However, inheriting a mutation in one of these genes from either parent, makes this cancer preventing protein less effective. This increases the chances of developing ovarian cancer."

Some possible early symptoms of ovarian cancer include pain in the pelvis, lower side of the body, lower stomach, and back; indigestion or heartburn; feeling full rapidly when eating; more frequent urination; pain during intercourse; and changes in bowel habits. As it progresses, symptoms such as nausea, weight loss, breathlessness, tiredness, and loss of appetite can also appear.

Adding further, Dr Aggarwal, said, “The treatment for this condition consists of surgery, chemotherapy, a combination of surgery with chemotherapy, and at times, radiotherapy as well.
The mode is decided depending on factors such as type of ovarian cancer, its stage and grade, and the patient’s general health. Contraceptive pills can help reduce the risk of ovarian cancer in women and also protect them from the disease even 30 years after they stop taking the drugs.”

Some other tips that can help prevent the risk of ovarian cancer in women include the following.

**Breastfeeding** The longer a woman breastfeeds, the lower her risk of ovarian and fallopian tube cancer.

**Pregnancy** The more full-term pregnancies a woman has had, the lower her risk of ovarian and fallopian tube cancer.

**Surgical procedures** Women who have had a hysterectomy or a tubal ligation may have a lower risk of developing ovarian cancer.

**Adopting a healthier lifestyle** This entails consuming more fruits and vegetables, exercising regularly, and avoiding smoking and drinking.

-Ends-

**About IMA:** Indian Medical Association is the only representative, national voluntary organization of Doctors of Modern Scientific System of Medicine, which looks after the interest of doctors as well as the well being of the community at large. It has its Headquarter in Delhi and State / Terr. Branches in 30 States and Union Territories. It has over 2, 60,000 doctors as its members through more than 1765 active local branches spread across the country.

**For further information please contact:**
Sanjeev Khanna - 9871079105
Md Adib Ahmad – 9873716235
mediaimahq@gmail.com
**IMA Public & Media Advocacy Cell**