

Introduction to pancreatic cancer

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Objectives

- Refresh knowledge on the statistics surrounding Pancreatic Cancer and what this might mean for patients and those affected by pancreatic cancer
- Reflect back on the role of the pancreas in health and how pancreatic cancer can effect these functions
- Look at how pancreatic cancer can present, its signs and symptoms and how it is diagnosed and treated.

Pancreatic Cancer is tough

Pancreatic cancer is the 10th most common cancer
Every day 28 people are diagnosed with the disease



More than half
of people diagnosed
with pancreatic
cancer die

**within 3
months**



Tough to diagnose

3 in 5

people are
diagnosed at an
advanced stage
(stage 3 and stage 4)



Tough to treat

1 in 10

people with
pancreatic cancer will
receive potentially
curative surgery



Tough to survive

Pancreatic cancer has
the lowest survival of
all common cancers,
with five-year survival

less than 7%



Tough to research

only 3%

of the annual UK
cancer research
budget goes into
pancreatic cancer



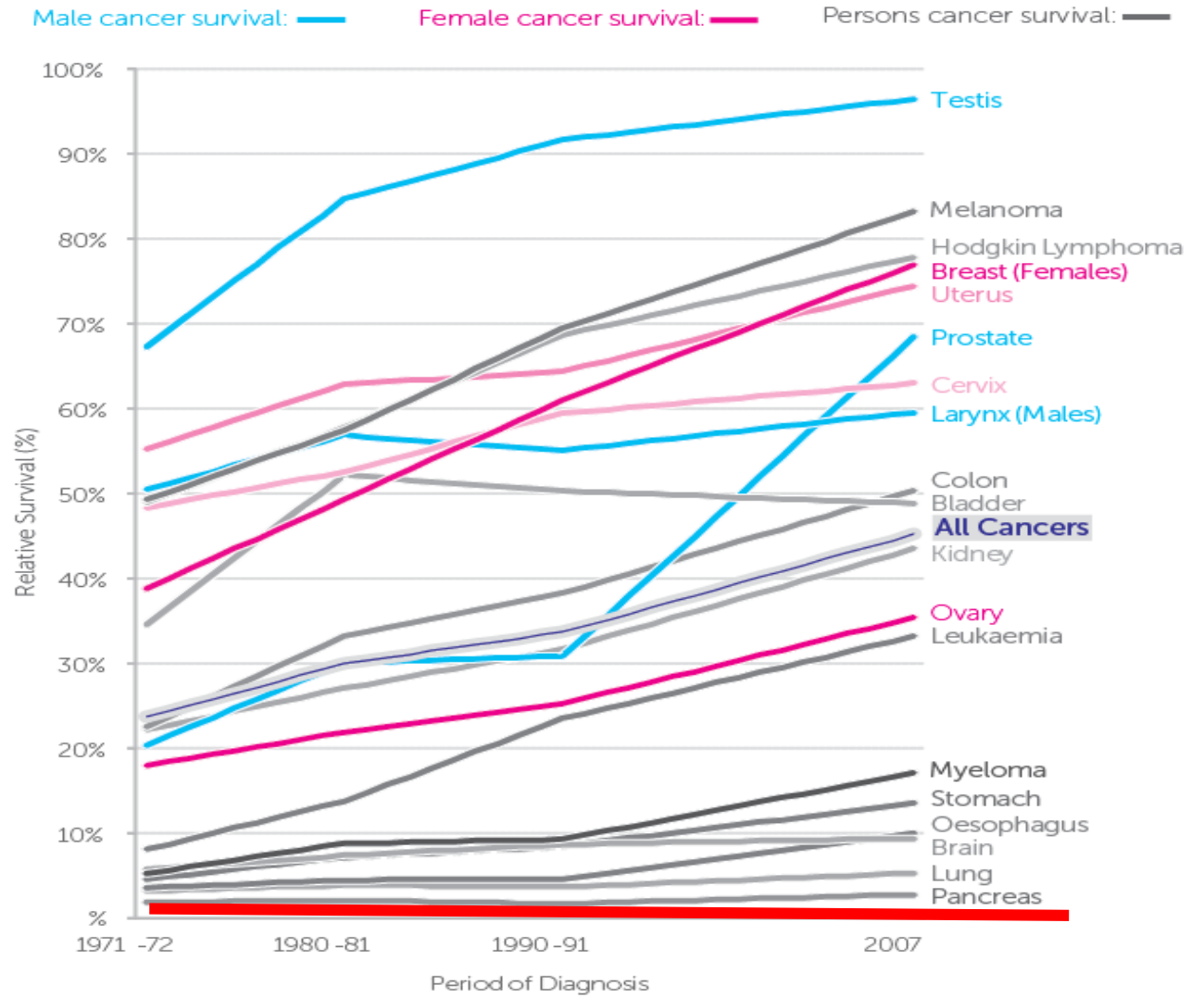
Nearly half

of all pancreatic
cancer patients are
diagnosed through

**emergency
routes**

e.g. A&E

5 year survival rate hasn't improved in last 40 years

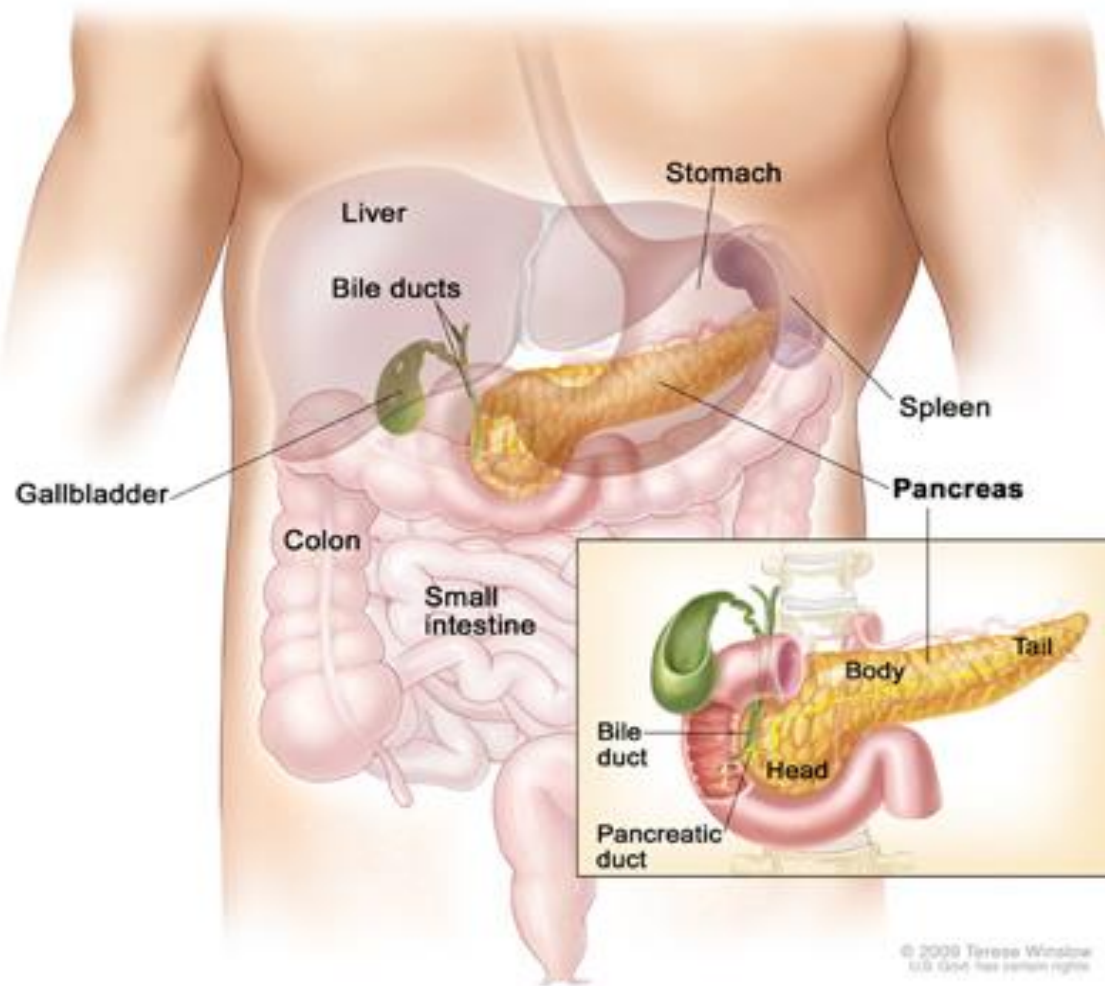


http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/sites/default/files/cstream-node/cs_surv_common.pdf
(October 2017)

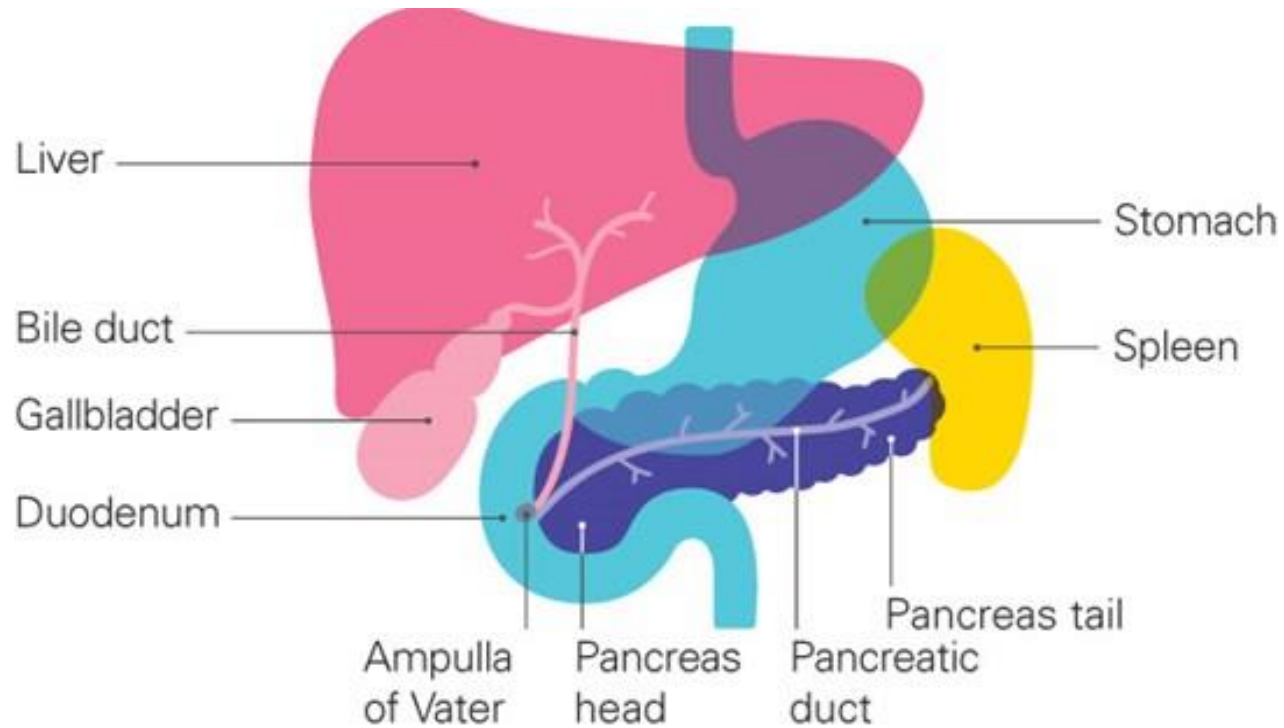
Challenges in early diagnosis

- Vague and non specific symptoms
- Symptoms often don't present until a late stage
- No simple diagnostic test

Where is the pancreas?

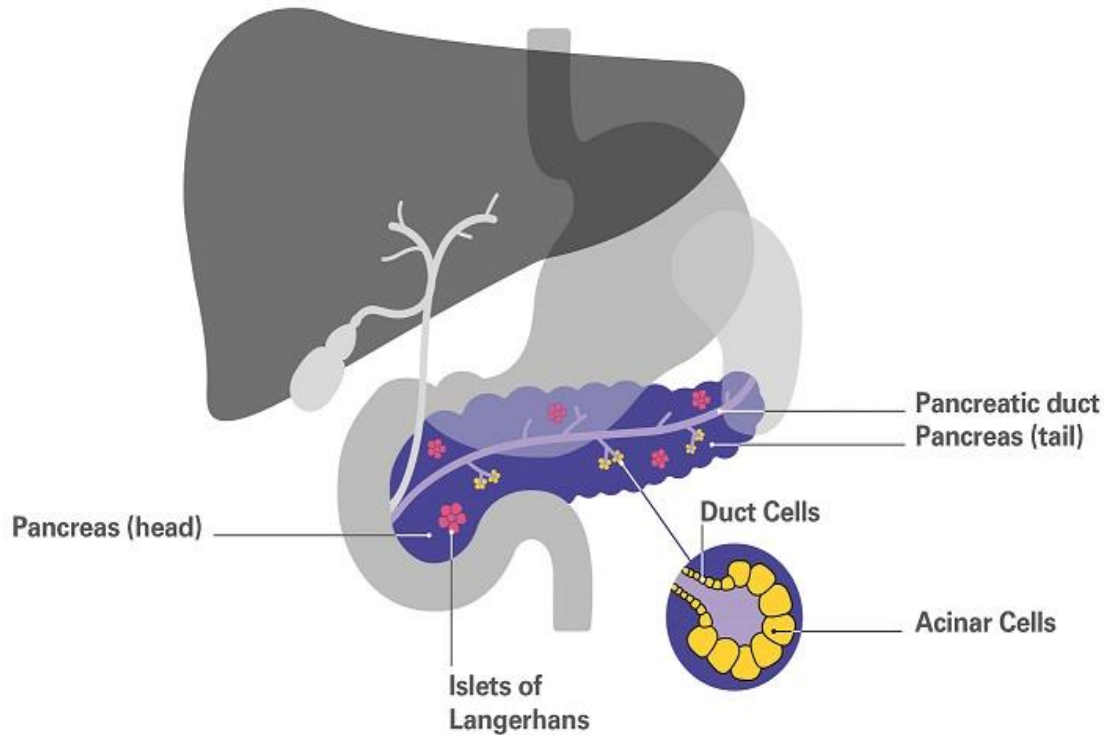


Functions of the pancreas



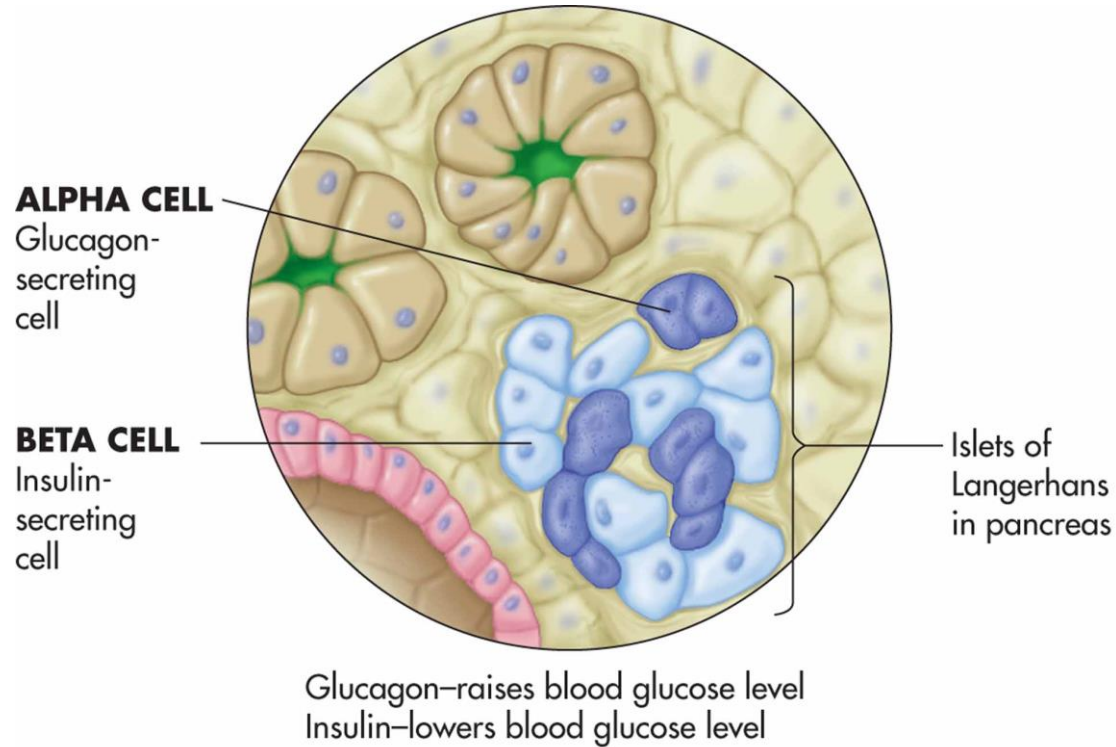
- Large gland situated deep in the abdomen in between the stomach and the spine.
- Plays an important role in digestion.
- Produces enzymes and hormones to help break down food and regulate blood sugar.

Exocrine Pancreas



- Digestive function – helps break down carbs, fats, proteins in the duodenum.
- The pancreatic enzymes travel along the pancreatic duct and become activated when they reach the duodenum.
- They also stimulate release of bicarbonate which neutralizes the stomach acid in the duodenum.

Endocrine Pancreas



- Insulin is released to regulate blood sugar levels
- Glucagon is released when more sugar is required for (ie: in the fright, fight, flight syndrome – stress response).
- Somatostatin which is known as an ‘inhibitor’ as decreases or increases the amount of glucose/insulin as required.

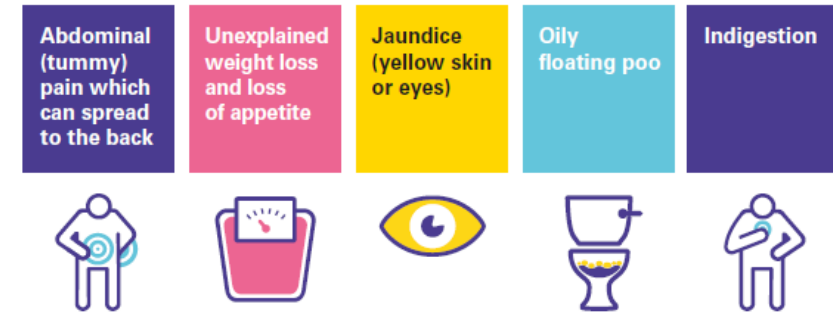
Signs and Symptoms

Signs and Symptoms

- Abdominal pain +/- back pain
- Dyspepsia/reflux/bloating
- Fatigue
- Change in bowel habits
- Unintentional weight loss
- New onset diabetes
- Jaundice
- Thromboembolism

Nobody knows your body better than you.

If you have any of these symptoms it might suggest a problem with your pancreas, such as pancreatic cancer.



If you have jaundice you should go to your GP without delay. If you have any of the other symptoms and they are unexplained or persistent (lasting 4 weeks or more), visit your GP. Remember, these symptoms can be signs of other conditions and may not be pancreatic cancer.

Diagnosing pancreatic cancer

Blood tests CA 19-9 and CEA specific pancreatic tumour markers, however if raised does not necessarily mean 'cancer'

Abdominal Ultrasound inexpensive, non invasive. If highlights an abnormality, then CT requested

CT (computed tomography) often given IV injection of contrast to highlight blood supply to certain organs. Good diagnostic tool

MRI/MRCP (magnetic resonance imaging/cholangiopancreatography) useful

addition to imaging, can be more specific for liver metastases and highlighting abnormalities within the bile ducts

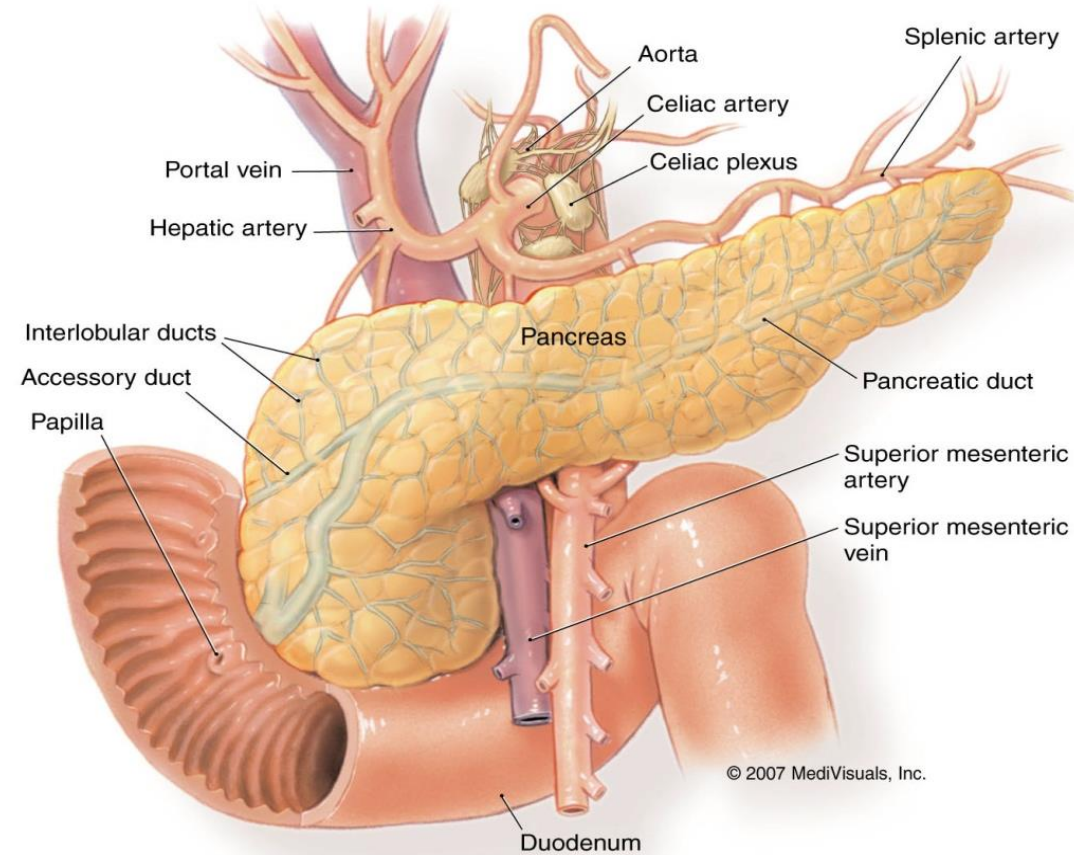
ERCP – (endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography) endoscope is passed through mouth, down the oesophagus into stomach and into the duodenum. A smaller tube is then inserted through the centre of endoscope and dye is injected to highlight any obstruction to its flow through the biliary system – biliary stents can also be placed at ERCP

PET – (Positron Emission Tomography) specialised nuclear medicine scan that utilizes radioactive substances. Use more often with those cases with locally advanced disease

EUS – (Endoscopic Ultrasound) Endoscope & ultrasound combined. Very accurate, good for visualizing lymph nodes and taking biopsies in particular

Abdominal blood vessels

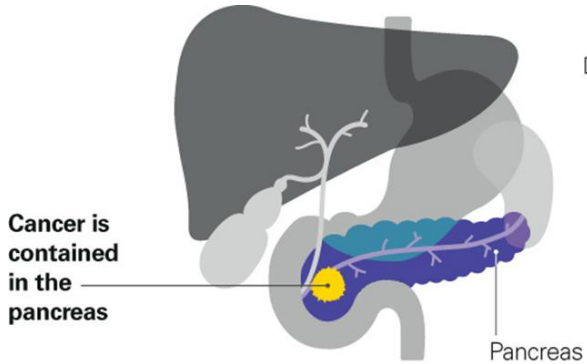
Normal Pancreas



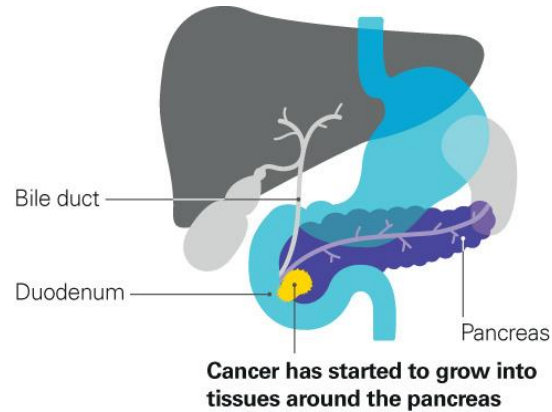
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Stages of Pancreatic Cancer

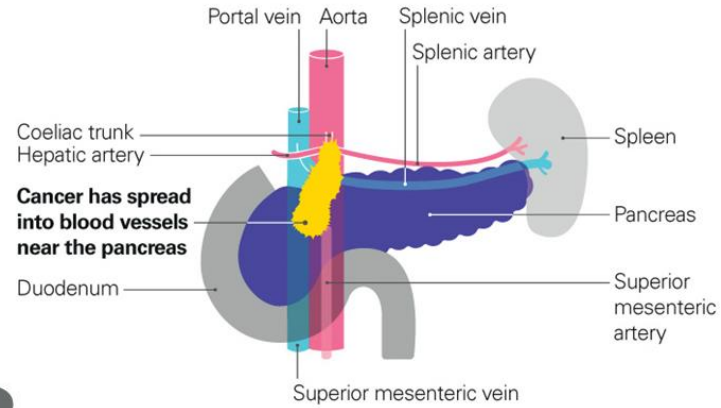
Stage 1:



Stage 2:



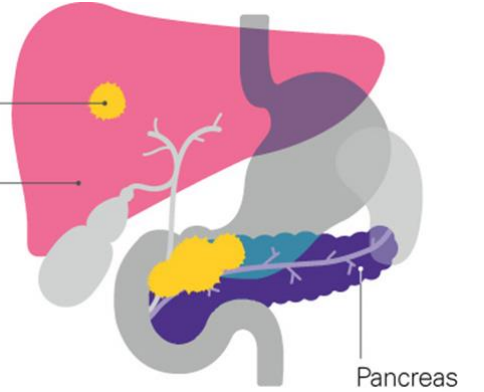
Stage 3:



Stage 4:

Cancer has spread to other parts of the body

Liver



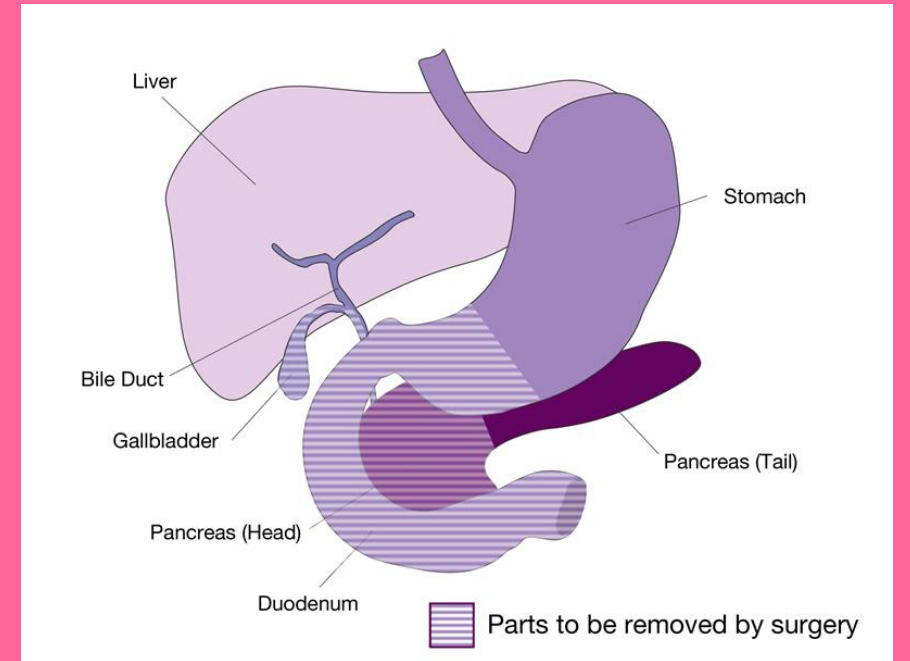
Pancreatic Cancer UK

Only 1 in 10 people with pancreatic cancer receive potentially curative surgery

Only 2 in 10 people will receive chemotherapy

Sadly 7 in 10 people with pancreatic cancer do not receive any active treatment, including surgery, chemotherapy or radiotherapy

– Best Supportive Care



Ongoing symptoms

- Pancreatic Enzyme Insufficiency, loss of appetite & weight loss
- Worsening glycaemic control
- Jaundice
- Ascites
- Gastric Outlet Obstruction
- Fatigue
- Psychological impact



Thank you!