

Thickening palms may be linked to underlying malignancy

Thickening of the facia of the palms may be linked to underlying ovarian cancer.

A paper in the *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* discusses how thickening of the palms can in some cases be an indication of underlying malignancy - in particular, ovarian tumours. This palmar fasciitis or fibrosis - where the tissue on the palms feels hard, almost wooden - sometimes occurs in conjunction with polyarthritis (where multiple joints become arthritic). The syndrome appears to be more commonly associated with ovarian cancer - which is often difficult to detect in its early stages.

"Ovarian cancer continues to account for 5% of cancer related deaths among women," says author Richard Stratton, a consultant physician at the Royal Free in London. "This case highlights the tendency of ovarian cancer to remain clinically hidden until an advanced stage. The syndrome of PFPAS (palmar fasciitis and polyarthritis), although rare, is important for clinicians to recognise because of its strong association with underlying malignancy, most commonly ovarian."

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