Ovarian cancer is described as being a whisper because it is challenging to diagnose at an early stage. Women need the voice to respond to the whisperings and nurses need to listen and acknowledge these voices. The purpose of this descriptive qualitative study is to examine personal stories of ovarian cancer within the framework of Women’s Ways of Knowing (WWK) to understand how women voice their “whisperings of ovarian cancer” and their interactions with healthcare providers. The importance of listening and acknowledging a woman’s voice is illustrated by the five categories of knowing delineated by WWK. The categories of knowing are silence, received knowledge, subjective knowledge, procedural knowledge, and constructed knowledge. Listening for a woman’s voice, acknowledging her voice, and being an advocate for her voice are key components of holistic care. Listening may play an instrumental role in the early diagnosis of ovarian cancer.

At a Glance

- Listening is fundamental to nursing.
- Women’s Ways of Knowing is a theoretical model that can be used to emphasize listening to women as they are screened for ovarian cancer.
- Women are at various stages of knowing when they encounter the healthcare system.

Literature Review

A review of the literature was conducted using the CINHAL® database. To begin the search, the key words, ovarian cancer, cancer screening, female, and early detection, resulted in 116 articles. The literature included discussions of evidence-based screening practices, recommended diagnostic tests, and the