

Breast Cancer

Breast cancer is the most common cancer in women worldwide, comprising 16% of all female cancers. It is estimated that 519 000 women died in 2004 due to breast cancer, and although breast cancer is thought to be a disease of the developed world, a majority (69%) of all breast cancer deaths occurs in developing countries (WHO Global Burden of Disease, 2004).

A familial history of breast cancer increases the risk by a factor of two or three. Some mutations, particularly in BRCA1, BRCA2 and p53 result in a very high risk for breast cancer. However, these mutations are rare and account for a small portion of the total breast cancer burden.

Reproductive factors associated with prolonged exposure to endogenous estrogens, such as early menarche, late menopause, late age at first childbirth are among the most important risk factors for breast cancer. Exogenous hormones also exert a higher risk for breast cancer. Oral contraceptive and hormone replacement therapy users are at higher risk than non-users. Breastfeeding has a protective effect (IARC, 2008, Lacey et al., 2009).

Control of specific modifiable breast cancer risk factors as well as effective integrated prevention of non-communicable diseases which promotes healthy diet, physical activity and control of alcohol intake, overweight and obesity, could eventually have an impact in reducing the incidence of breast cancer in the long term.

There are two early detection methods:

- early diagnosis or awareness of early signs and symptoms in symptomatic populations in order to facilitate diagnosis and early treatment, and
- screening that is the systematic application of a screening test in a presumably asymptomatic population. It aims to identify individuals with an abnormality suggestive of cancer.

Questions: (Express your ideas)

1. What is the article all about?

2. What are the risk factors of Breast Cancer?

3. What are the two early detection methods for Breast Cancer?

4. What are the signs and symptoms of Breast Cancer?

5. What are the treatments for Breast Cancer?

6. What are the ways to prevent the incidence of Breast Cancer?

7. What advises can you give to a patient who just had mastectomy?