

Breast Cancer Fact Sheet

Breast cancer is the most prevalent cancer among women worldwide.

It is also the leading cause of death in women and it has been estimated that 5.8 million women worldwide will die from it by 2025. ^(1,2,6) A large number of these deaths will occur in less developed regions. The two main reasons for higher breast cancer death rates in such regions are late stage diagnosis and limited access to treatment. Other factors include lack of awareness regarding early detection, prevention and treatment. ⁽¹⁾

25% of all diagnosed cancers are breast cancers.

In 2012 1,676,600 new cases of breast cancer in women were detected. Of those women 521,900 died. ⁽²⁾

Incidence rates of breast cancer in developed countries tend to be much higher, due to a number of factors but not solely lifestyle. Technology and early detection are also larger factors in the disparity of the numbers. The five-year breast cancer survival rate lies at 90% in US, Australia and Canada whereas in parts of Africa it is a mere 12%

Breast cancer is the most common cancer in women globally with a few exceptions in eastern and western Africa as well as central and south America, where the incidence of cervical cancer has precedence. Women in China and Vietnam have a higher incidence of lung cancer with breast cancer incidence rates following closely behind.

Detection

Early detection is highlighted as a crucial factor in breast cancer survival as there is a strong association between tumor size at diagnosis and survival rates. ⁽³⁾

The International Union against Cancer (UICC) states that the most effective breast cancer control strategy is to detect breast cancer in its most early stages and then act with prompt, adequate treatment. Two early detection approaches are screening asymptomatic women and early diagnosis among symptomatic women. ⁽³⁾

Risk Factors

The strongest risk factors for breast cancer include age, familial and reproductive factors.

The risk of breast cancer doubles if she has a first degree relative (mother, sister, daughter) who has already been diagnosed with breast cancer. ⁽⁴⁾

Less than 15% of women diagnosed with breast cancer have a family member who has already been diagnosed. ⁽⁴⁾

Genetic mutations are thought to cause 5-10% of breast cancers. ⁽⁴⁾

Your risk of breast cancer increases as you age. One in every eight women who live to be 70 will get or have had breast cancer at some stage in their lives. ⁽⁵⁾

2. <http://www.cancer.org/research/cancerfactsstatistics/index>

3. [uicc.org](http://www.uicc.org)

4. [breastcancer.org](http://www.breastcancer.org)

5. [worldwidebreastcancer.org](http://www.worldwidebreastcancer.org)