Breast Cancer in Caribbean Women

BAHAMAS BREAST CANCER INITIATIVE

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To educate and nurture students, to create knowledge, and to provide service to our community and beyond. Committed to excellence and proud of the diversity of our University family, we strive to develop future leaders of our nation and the world.
Things That We Know About Breast Cancer

- Rate of breast cancer in European women
  90/100,000 women annually

- Rate of breast cancer in West African women
  30/100,000 women annually

- Breast Cancer Death Rate of West African and European women
  15/100,000 women annually

- This points to a later diagnosis and worse survival for African women
Breast Cancer in Caribbean Women

- We believe that the breast cancer rate in Caribbean women is between that of American women and African women.
- In many Caribbean countries it is unclear what the breast cancer rate is due to the non-existence of tumor registrars.
- Even in countries with tumor registrars the rates are often calculated from a representative county or parish rather than from the country as a whole.
Fertility in the Caribbean Women

- Epidemiologically the Caribbean is in the middle of a transformation from Third World to First World fertility patterns.
- This is occurring over the course of 1 generation
- BMI has increased throughout the Caribbean
- The age at menarche is decreasing
- The age of menopause is increasing
- The number of children/woman has dropped significantly
- The age at first pregnancy is higher
- All of these factors impact on the breast cancer rate in Caribbean women
Mystery in the Bahamas
28% OF BAHAMIAN WOMEN WITH BREAST CANCER HAD A DELETERIOUS MUTATION IN BRCA 1 OR BRCA2

The Highest Rate in the World
## Average Age of Women with Breast Cancer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Average Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barbados</td>
<td>46.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cayman Islands</td>
<td>51.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominica</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinidad and Tobago</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*63% are premenopausal*
## Distribution of Stage by Country

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Stage 0</th>
<th>Stage 1</th>
<th>Stage 2</th>
<th>Stage 3</th>
<th>Stage 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bahamas</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbados</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cayman</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>46.9</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominica</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinidad</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>America</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
86% OF BREAST CANCERS ARE SELF DETECTED
Breast and Cervical Cancer is killing Caribbean women

- Breast cancer and cervical cancer are the leading cause of cancer death in Caribbean women
- 86% of breast cancers are self detected in Caribbean women
- Late stage breast cancer predominates
- Tests for ER and her-2 are not done in some countries
- The test for ER is temperature dependent
- Breast self exam is culturally unacceptable
- Screening mammography is not feasible
- Pap smears are cumbersome, time consuming and require a lot of healthcare provider time
- Herceptin is prohibitively expensive
WE NEED A CARIBBEAN WOMEN’S CANCER INITIATIVE
Find it early, improve the treatment and prevent it!

- Tumor registrars are critical
- Screening mammography is never going to be done on a large scale in the Caribbean so we need to shift the stage at diagnosis
- Change the way that breast self exam is done and taught. Relabel it. Make it a part of a modesty routine when donning bra on a daily basis.
- Develop a temperature insensitive and cheap test for ER
- Promote self done pap smears. Healthcare time is better spent on those with HPV infection and not on those without it
- Evaluate the efficacy of single dose herceptin
- Vaccinate all children for HPV
- Pilot Oncotype testing in Caribbean women with ER positive breast cancer to see if chemotherapy is always needed.
- Train other health care providers in cancer care.