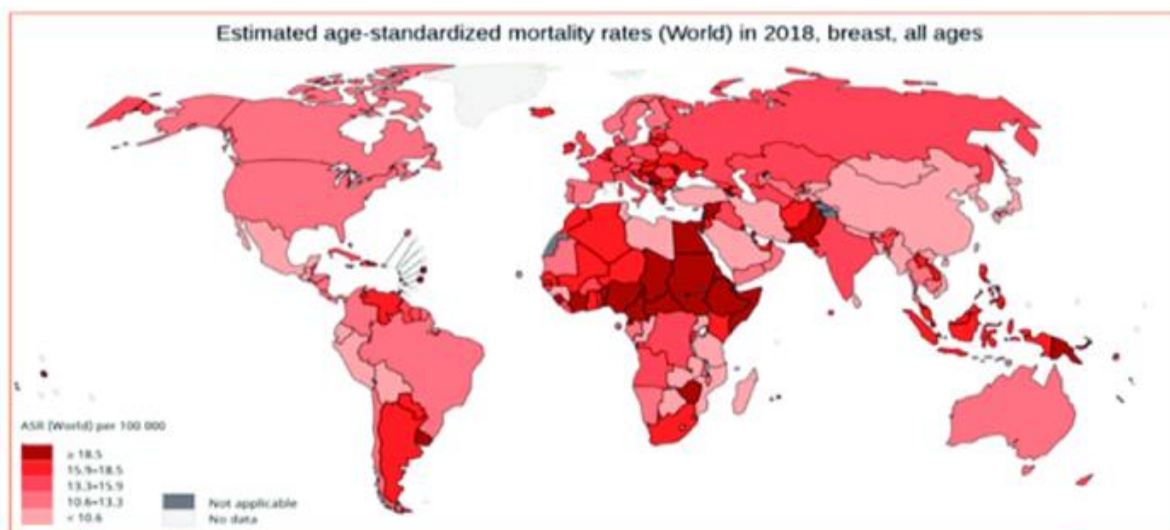


Pink October is the month to focus on breast cancer. How can breast cancer be prevented, detected and treated?

An emblematic disease, breast cancer is a part of every woman's history. Gentlemen, this message concerns you too - you are not spared!

In 157 out of 185 countries, breast cancer is the most common cancer in women (23.8%)^[1]. It affects 2,300,000 women worldwide (and could reach 3,200,000 by 2030^[2]), and the mortality rate is still 11.4%. There will still be 700,000 deaths from breast cancer in 2022^[3].

Breast cancer is now being treated better and better. New, increasingly targeted treatments are making it possible to attack it and, in the best cases, to cure it - mortality fell by 40% between 1980 and 2020 - but worldwide statistics show a significant geographical disparity in survival.



Global map presenting incidence and mortality rates by world countries for breast cancer in female in all age, in 2018 [Source: GLOBOCAN 2018].

Sally Cowal of the ACS (Association Cancer Society) explains that the rise in cancers is due to an increase in the frequency of 'known cancer risk factors linked to the rapid economic transition, such as physical inactivity, poor diet, obesity and reproductive factors such as late childbearing'.

Screening? What's the point?

Many people do not wish to undergo screening for a variety of reasons:

- I'm too young
- I'm afraid
- Why would it happen to me?
- I have no previous history
- I don't engage in risky behaviour
- It's pointless, it won't happen to me
- Mammograms are dangerous for your health
- I'm a man
- Etc...

And yet....

Together, we can change the statistics and increase the survival rate.

Screening is recommended from the age of 50, as 50% of breast cancers are diagnosed between the ages of 50 and 69, and 28% after the age of 69 (screening 70% of women over the age of 50 for breast cancer reduces the mortality rate by 20 to 30%). Unfortunately, the disease is spreading, becoming increasingly aggressive and rapid. It affects more and more young, even very young, women of childbearing age - 10% of breast cancers are diagnosed in women under 35 and 20% between 35 and 50 - sometimes for reasons of genetic predisposition, but not exclusively.

It also affects men (1% of breast cancers are male) and although the percentage may seem insignificant, it is not, because few men undergo screening.

You need to know

Diagnosis at an advanced stage carries the risk of the cancer spreading to other organs through the lymphatic system... it is no longer local and can become metastatic if not diagnosed in time.

A diagnosis at an advanced stage requires more extensive treatment (chemotherapy, targeted therapies, radiotherapy, etc.), whereas a lumpectomy may be sufficient for a disease diagnosed in situ, i.e. in its early stages.

But early diagnosis increases the chances of cure and survival!

Screening? What does it involve?

It can be very simple. First of all, *you should do a breast self-examination*, every month and at any age!

Mammography: an X-ray to detect breast abnormalities. It is the most effective method of detecting breast cancer.

Ultrasound : in the event of a doubtful image on mammography, or dense breasts, *ultrasound* (an imaging test using ultrasound) will provide additional information. Ultrasound is also used to guide biopsies. If an abnormality is detected, a biopsy (removal of tissue for analysis) will be carried out.

MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) is used to confirm or refute a diagnosis. These methods are simple, they are more or less invasive, but they save lives! So don't hesitate!

- I have a family history
- I notice an abnormality on autopalpation
- I'm not sure about a symptom
- I'm over 50

I want to be screened!

As ILO civil servants, we are fortunate to have excellent health cover. All these tests are reimbursed by CAPS and **mammography is covered at 100% every 2 years from the age of 40^[1]!**

Not knowing won't keep cancer at bay!
Facing up to it as soon as possible is your chance of beating it!
I'm aware of the risks, I have good health cover,
I'M DRINKING!
I TAKE CARE OF MY HEALTH!
Spread the word to your friends, family and acquaintances,
Lives can be saved!

I'm not a doctor, but I've been ill, and I went for screening, initially for no particular reason, but it saved my life. I understand your deepest fears.

In my capacity as a colleague and in complete confidentiality, I am ready to listen to you, to answer your questions when I can or to direct you towards specific organisations, to guide you through the administrative maze of the Organisation. The Organisation has already anticipated some of your needs, but sometimes, in the panic and stress, you can't find the essential information.

You can contact me by email or Teams, and for those who are at headquarters come and see me directly at the office, I'm on 6-10.

Take care of yourself and spread the word so that screening becomes systematic !!!!

Sophie Guerre Chaillet
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- [1] [CAPS Statutes - 2024 \(ilo.org\)](#) Code 8.
- [1] WHO (World Health Organisation) - 202
- [2] The Lance medical journal
- [3] Global Cancer Obser