

**BreastScreen Australia
Monitoring Report
2001–2002**

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2001–2002

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and the
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for the
BreastScreen Australia Program**

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Summary

This is the sixth national monitoring report for the BreastScreen Australia Program. The report presents statistics on BreastScreen Australia screening activity and outcomes for 2001–2002. A reporting interval of two years is used because it corresponds with the recommended interval between screens for asymptomatic women in the target age group of 50–69 years.

Participation

- A total of 1,611,262 women participated in BreastScreen Australia screening in 2001–2002. Of these women, 1,102,227 (68%) were in the screening program target age group of 50–69 years.
- The proportion of women in the target population participating in the BreastScreen Australia Program has been steadily increasing, from 52.3% in 1996–1997 to 57.1% in 2001–2002.
- Although there was some variation in participation rates among different socioeconomic groups in the target population, the difference between the most and the least disadvantaged groups was only marginally significant, and all groups had participation rates above 55%.
- The participation rates for Indigenous women and women from a non-English speaking background in the target population, 34.8% and 47.4% respectively, were significantly lower than the national rate of 57.1%.

Detection of cancer

- In order to reduce morbidity and mortality resulting from breast cancer, BreastScreen Australia aims to maximise the early detection of small-diameter (15 mm or less) invasive breast cancers. In 2002, 63% of all invasive breast cancers detected by BreastScreen Australia were small-diameter cancers. This proportion reduced to 54.0% for women who were attending for their first screen and increased to 65.8% for women who had previously been screened.
- For women in the target age group, the age-standardised rate of small-diameter invasive cancer detection was 29.1 per 10,000 women screened in 2002. This was not significantly different from the 2001 rate of 29.0 per 10,000 women screened.
- Data on interval cancers (that is, an invasive cancer detected between two screening rounds) were not available for New South Wales for 24-month follow-up. For other jurisdictions, the age-standardised rates of interval cancer for women in the target age group in the 24 months after their first screen ranged from 7.0 per 10,000 women-years in the Northern Territory to 15.6 per 10,000 women-years in Tasmania.
- ‘Program sensitivity’ is the proportion of invasive breast cancers that are detected within the BreastScreen Australia Program out of all invasive breast cancers (interval cancers plus screen-detected cancers) diagnosed in Program-screened women in the screening interval. The Program sensitivity rate for women in the target age group in the 24 months after their first screen ranged from 69.1% in Tasmania to 85.1% in Western Australia.
- In 2002, 849 cases of ductal carcinoma in situ (see page 26) were detected in women participating in the BreastScreen Australia Program. The age-standardised detection rate

for this condition was 10.5 per 10,000 women screened for women in the target age group and 10.0 per 10,000 women screened for all women aged 40 and over.

Recall for assessment

- In 2002, the proportion of women recalled for assessment because of an abnormal mammogram result was significantly higher for women being screened for the first time compared with women who had previously been screened. While 8.7% of women attending their first round of screening were recalled for further testing, only 4.2% of women attending for a subsequent round of screening were recalled.

Rescreening

- The proportion of women attending a BreastScreen Australia service in 2000 and returning for rescreening within the recommended 27-month interval increased with the number of previous screens. The age-standardised national rescreen rate for women attending a BreastScreen Australia service in 2000 for the first time was 61.8%. The rescreen rate increased to 72.0% for women attending for their second screen and 80.6% for women attending for a third or subsequent screen.

Breast cancer incidence

- With some fluctuations, there was a notable increase between 1987 and 2001 in the age-standardised breast cancer incidence rates for women in the target age group. Incidence increased in the target age group from 196.9 new cancers per 100,000 women in 1987 to 305.4 per 100,000 women in 2001.
- Of the 11,791 new cases of breast cancer in 2001, 5,802 (49%) occurred in women in the target age group. Only 6% of cases were women aged under 40 years. Age-specific incidence rates in 2001 ranged from 123.1 new cancers per 100,000 women in the 40–44 age group to 352.7 new cases per 100,000 women in the 60–64 age group.
- Between 1996 and 2001, the national age-standardised incidence rate of ductal carcinoma in situ for women aged 50–69 years was 37.5 per 100,000 women. Across states and territories, the rate ranged from 17.4 cases per 100,000 women in the Northern Territory to 50.0 cases per 100,000 women in Western Australia.

Breast cancer mortality

- From 1993 onwards, a steady decline is evident in the age-standardised mortality rates for women in the target age group. The mortality rate for these women was 68.3 deaths per 100,000 women in 1988; in 2002, the corresponding figure was 56.7. A similar pattern of decline in mortality rates can be observed in women aged 70 and over. Mortality rates for women aged under 50 years remained the lowest and most consistent, staying below 8 deaths per 100,000 women for the period 1987 to 2002.