

Current Health Event

Breast cancer

In celebration of the 14th national breast cancer awareness campaign, the Ministry of Public Health, under the patronage of Prime Minister's wife Mrs. Lama Tammam Salam, organized a breast cancer forum at the Grand Serail, in collaboration with the Lebanese Order of Physicians, Order of Pharmacists, Order of Nurses, Order of Midwives, syndicate of hospitals and the National Breast Cancer Committee.

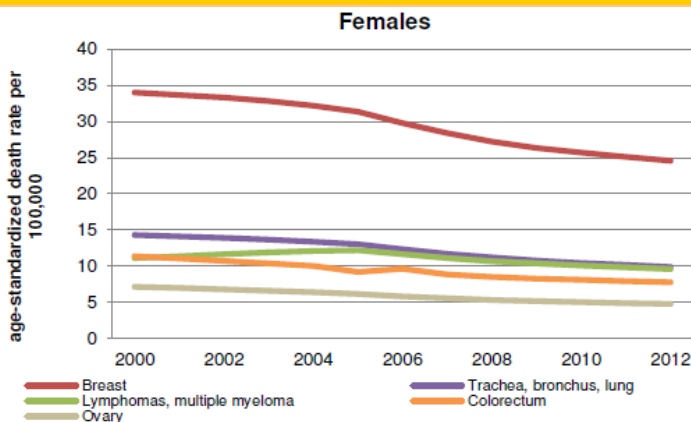
Editorial note:

There are 1.1 million new cases of female breast cancer each year worldwide. In Lebanon, data available from the cancer registry (2007) shows that breast cancer constitutes 41% of all cancer cases among women and 21% of all cancer cases.

Factors that are associated with an increased risk of breast cancer include: increasing age (78% of breast cancer patients are above 50), obesity, having the first menstrual period at a younger age and menopause at an older age, family history of breast cancer, postmenopausal hormone therapy, no children or a late first pregnancy, lifestyle factors including smoking, high alcohol consumption, high-fat diet and limited physical activity.

However, when diagnosed at an early stage, cancer is more likely to be treated successfully. More than 90% of women diagnosed with breast cancer at an early stage survive, compared to 15% at advanced stages. The MoPH has adopted the Breast

Figure: Age-Standardized Cancer Mortality Trends in Lebanon* (WHO, 2014)



*No mortality data available. Figures are based on national incidence estimates and modelled survival.

Cancer Task Force recommendations: breast self-examination every month starting age 20, clinical breast examination every three years between the ages of 20 and 40. Starting age 40 annual clinical breast examination and mammography are recommended. Women with known genetic family history of breast cancer should start screening earlier depending on medical advice. (Adib, 2009)

Symptoms of breast cancer include:

- Thickening or swelling in the breast tissue.
- A hard lump in the breast or armpit (axilla).
- Changes in breast shape or size.
- Skin changes.
- Nipple changes.
- Inversion of the nipple or pain in nipple area.
- Pain in any area of the breast.

The nation-wide awareness campaign will run for three months enabling women to gain access to discounted mammography exams available till the end of December. Public lectures with municipalities and women NGOs are being organized by the medical societies and patient support groups. The campaign is also being promoted through educational leaflets and various media outlets. WHO promotes comprehensive breast cancer control programmes as part of national cancer control plans.

Cumulative Notifiable Diseases in Lebanon*

Disease	2014	2015**	Oct.	Nov.
Vaccine Preventable Diseases				
Polio	0(0)	0 (0)	0(0)	0(0)
AFP	53(16)	75(9)	0(0)	0(0)
Measles	235(107)	37(11)	1(1)	6(1)
Mumps	736(117)	1400(337)	15(6)	4(1)
Pertussis	87(25)	37(6)	0(0)	0(0)
Rabies	1(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
Rubella	18(12)	9(1)	0(0)	0(0)
Tetanus	0(0)	3(0)	1(0)	0(0)
Viral Hep. B	218(33)	140(22)	0(0)	0(0)
Water/Food Borne Diseases				
Brucellosis	252(36)	333(57)	11(3)	1(0)
Cholera	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
Hydatid cyst	16(2)	14(1)	0(0)	0(0)
Typhoid fever	546(33)	473(50)	67(9)	2(0)
Viral Hep. A	2582(911)	877(159)	52(4)	4(0)
Other Diseases				
Leishmaniasis	663(638)	32(23)	0(0)	0(0)
Meningitis	232(35)	309(53)	16(0)	10(2)
Viral Hep C	100(6)	65(3)	0(0)	0(0)

*Numbers in brackets refer to Syrian **as of 20 Nov 2015