香港乳癌基金會
HK Breast Cancer Foundation

Data Sheet

(updated: 2 November 2026)

Breast Cancer in Hong Kong

Breast cancer is the most common cancer facing women around the world and an important public health issue. Over the past 10 years, the breast cancer incidence rate has continued to rise in North America and climbed in Asia. Regionally, Hong Kong's incidence rate has increased and is one of the highest.

- Breast cancer is number one cancer facing HK women.
- In 2023, 5,585 females and 18 males were diagnosed with invasive breast cancer.
- For the second consecutive year, breast cancer (including male breast cancer) surpassed colorectal cancer to become the second most common cancer in Hong Kong.
- Over the past thirty-one years, the number of breast cancer cases among women in Hong Kong has significantly increased. In 2023, the number of women diagnosed with invasive breast cancer was nearly five times higher than in 1991.
- One in every 13 women has a chance of developing invasive breast cancer in her lifetime.
- If in situ breast cancer is factored in, 1 in 12 women develops breast cancer in her lifetime.
- About 15 women die from breast cancer every week on average.
- The median age of local patients is 60, much younger than 63 and 62.8 in the USA and Australia respectively.
- Over 94% of breast cancer patients are over 40 years of age. The older, the higher the risk.

Source: Female breast cancer in 2023, Hong Kong Cancer Registry, Hospital Authority

Establishment of the Hong Kong Breast Cancer Foundation

Hong Kong Breast Cancer Foundation (HKBCF) was founded on 8 March 2005 by Founder Dr. Polly Cheung, together with a group of patients, doctors and friends who share a common goal to mitigate the threat of breast cancer to the local community. HKBCF is the first NGO focusing on breast health education, patient support, research and advocacy. Dr. Eliza Fok is the current Chairman since 2011.

Our Work

1. Breast Health Centre

Breast Health Centre (BHC) was set up in May 2011 to provide paid and free breast cancer risk assessment, breast health examinations, doctor consultation services and diagnostic procedures. To date, it has served an attendance of 205,449. Through providing mammography and ultrasound examinations for 128,574 times, 2,852 people (aged between 23 and 89) have been diagnosed with breast cancer. The overall detection rate is 2.41% and for asymptomatic cases is 0.71%, which is on par with the worldwide standard. BHC has provided 68,415 subsidised screening services (free & co-pay options) to women facing financial difficulties. Among these beneficiaries, 1,122 individuals were diagnosed with breast cancer.

BHC launched the first-in-Hong-Kong breast cancer risk assessment service, which is on par with international standards, to help women understand their risks and encourage them to take preventive measures accordingly. BHC and BCSC also holds educational talks regularly and some of them provide onsite clinical breast examinations. To date, 145,170 people have attended the talks on breast health and breast cancer prevention through our services.

2. Breast Cancer Support Centre

Breast Cancer Support Centre (BCSC) provides individual and group counseling for breast cancer patients, their families and carers, pre- and post-treatment information sessions, monthly educational talks, lymphoedema care services, Traditional Chinese Medicine services, drug financial assistance programme, free wig programme, free bra, free bandage and comfort packs, as well as interest classes and group activities serving 15,903 patients. To date, BCSC has served patients (aged between 20 and 93) over 361,889 times.

HKBCF is the first charitable organisation in Hong Kong to provide lymphoedema index measurement services. Since October 2010, we have provided lymphoedema care services, including lymphoedema index measurement and individual lymphoedema treatments with 103,501 attendances. In addition, our drug financial assistance programme has helped reduce financial burden for 2,819 eligible patients, with accumulated financial assistance totaling over HK$ 43,768,080. Since March 2012, we have provided free wig, prosthetic bra, and bandage to 701 patients. Since 2019, our gene testing financial assistance programme has subsidised 554 low-income patients, with accumulated subsidy totalling HK$16,449,680.

3. Breast Cancer Research Centre

During its inception, the HKBCF built a dedicated registry, the Hong Kong Breast Cancer Registry (HKBCR) to capture the data of local breast cancer patients for developing treatment options and healthcare policies best suited to the local situation. In 2017, the HKBCF decided to name its research unit the Breast Cancer Research Centre (BCRC). Expanded in size and scope of research, BCRC will continue to collect data and provide analyses on breast cancer status and phenomenon, and to collaborate with other research agencies/institutions on breast cancer studies.

Steered by a committee comprised of medical, legal, managerial and public health professionals and representatives of breast cancer patients, HKBCR is a member of the International Association of Cancer Registries (IACR). It has registered 34,936 patients / survivors (aged 18-103), through 66 public hospitals, private hospitals and clinics.

HKBCR has published 18 annual reports presenting local breast cancer data and analysis. Highlights of the latest 11 reports:

Report No. 8 (2016): Elders with breast cancer tend to delay seeking medical care and have later cancer stage.
Report No. 9 (2017): Neoadjuvant chemo-therapy reduces tumour size & need for mastectomy.
Report No. 10 (2018): Fight breast cancer: Act NOW to reduce risk and introduce screening scheme
Report No. 11 (2019): A 12-year study showed regular screening and precision medicine are key to recovery.
Report No. 12 (2020): Mammography performed with ultrasound boosts detection accuracy
Report No. 13 (2021): Use of Positron Emission Tomography (PET) local practice utilisation in preoperative staging of breast cancer
Report No. 14 (2022): 10-year survival analysis of Chinese breast cancer patients in Hong Kong
Report No. 15 (2023): Mammogram Screening Saves Lives, Saves Treatment Cost
Report No. 16 (2024): Analyze De Novo Metastatic Breast Cancer Precise Staging Enhances Treatment
Report No. 17 (2025): Early Diagnosis Reduces Distant Recurrence
Report No. 18 (2026): Similarities and Differences Between Screen-detected and Symptom-detected Breast Cancer

Early Detection Saves Lives

Globally 34 advanced and developing countries are promoting public screenings for breast cancer, including mainland China, Japan, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan. Early detection of breast cancer can lower mortality rate. One study indicates that universal biennial mammography was the most effective strategy for detecting breast cancer early and achieved in a 40% reduction in mortality rate through reduction in stage II or above breast cancer cases. [1] However, no significant mortality reduction was seen in risk-based mammography. [1]

HKBCF suggests women over 40 follow a three-step breast health examination routine:

Monthly breast self-examination

Biennial clinical breast health examination

Biennial mammogram

Early Detection Saves Lives - early stage breast cancer has a close to 100% survival rate and renders less complicated treatment, lesser need for chemotherapy, lesser trauma to the patient and lower medical costs.

HKBCF research found that about 80% of the breast cancers detected through mammogram screening were early stages (0 & I), while self-detection found more advanced stage cases(19%) than mammogram(3%).[2] The estimated 10-year overall survival was higher in mammogram-detected patients(95.7%) than in self-detected patients(88.4%).[2]

Unfortunately, according to HKBCF survey, 80% of women were aware of the importance of breast cancer screenings yet only 20% underwent regular screenings.[3] In addition, screenings were less common among women with less education, and also less common among women of lower income.[4]

Source:
1 Yen AM et al. JAMA Oncol. 2016;2(7):915-921.
2 HKBCR Bulletin Issue14
3 HKBCF: survey report on perceptions&awareness of breast cancer screening in Hong Kong Women
4 HK Breast Cancer Registry Report No.15

Milestones

2005

- Inauguration of the HKBCF on 8 March
- Start of patient support services and breast cancer educational talks
- The first Pink Walk for Breast Health

2006

- Released survey results on Hong Kong women's perception and awareness of breast cancer examination

2007

- Co-organised the Breast Cancer Conference with The Hong Kong Cancer Institute, CUHK
- Established the HKBCR

2008

- Launched the Free Mammography Screening Programme

2009

- Launched the Breast Cancer Drug Financial Assistance Programme
- Office relocated to Fortress Hill
- Published HKBCR Report No. 1

2010

- Launched lymphoedema care services
- Launched young patient (< 40) support group

2011

- Opened the BHC

2012

- Organised the first Survivorship Camp
- Organised seminars on upper lymphoedema care and education

2013

- Organised seminar on "Updates on Early Detection of Breast Cancer"
- Declared May as the Month of Breast Cancer Survivorship
- Launched the first-in-Hong Kong breast cancer risk assessment service

2014

- Launched Breast Cancer HK Online, Hong Kong's first breast cancer online database for medical professional to access the data collected by the HKBCR

2015

- Launched 10th Anniversary Campaign to raise awareness of breast cancer risks
- Was granted a piece of land by HK government on a short-term tenancy agreement to establish Kowloon Centre

2016

- The groundbreaking of HKBCF Jockey Club Breast Health Centre (Kowloon)

2017

- BHC in North Point underwent renovation and procurement of new equipment, having funded by the HSBC 150th Anniversary Charity Programme

2018

- Officially opened HKBCF Jockey Club Breast Health Centre (Kowloon)

2019

- Rolled out Breast Awareness Campaign
- Lobbied the Government to Implement Population-wide Breast Screening
- Rolled out Hong Kong's First Lymphoedema Training Course

2020

- Launched 15th Anniversary Live Symposium on Breast Health Education to raise awareness of breast health and risk of breast cancer
- Government's Policy Address 2020 announced that the Department of Health will provide breast cancer screening for eligible women having regard to their breast cancer risk

2021

- The first Traditional Chinese Medicine Clinic was launched in April
- After years of advocacy by the HKBCF, the HKSAR Government launched the risk-based "Breast Cancer Screening Pilot Programme" in September

2023

- Lymphoedema Care Centre officially opened

High Risk Factors

1. Lack of exercise (< 3 hours per week)
2. No breastfeeding
3. Overweight or obese
4. High level of stress (> 50% of time)
5. No childbirth or first live birth after age 35
6. Family history of breast cancer
7. Diet rich in meat or dairy products
8. Early menarche (< 12 years old)
9. Drinking alcohol
10. Use of hormonal replacement therapy

Source: HK Breast Cancer Registry Report No.15

Symptoms of Breast Cancer

- Painless Lump in breast
- Pitting on the skin (looks like orange peel)
- Dimpling in the breast
- Nipple turns inward into the breast
- Discharge / bleeding from the nipple
- A lump / enlarged lymph node in the underarm

Most often, these changes may not be caused by cancer. Still, a woman should see her doctor about any unusual changes in her breast.

Source: HKBCF Passport to Breast Health

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HKBCF is a registered charitable organisation (IRD File No.: 91/7226).