

Research Summary:

Breast cancer survival in NSW Aboriginal women

Introduction

Breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in Aboriginal women and the second most common cause of cancer death. A previous report showed that NSW Aboriginal women with breast cancer were younger and more likely to have advanced spread of disease at diagnosis than non-Aboriginal women.

Why is this study important?

This is the largest study of breast cancer in Australian Aboriginal women. Before we did this study very little was known about the medical treatment Aboriginal women receive or their survival after being diagnosed with breast cancer.

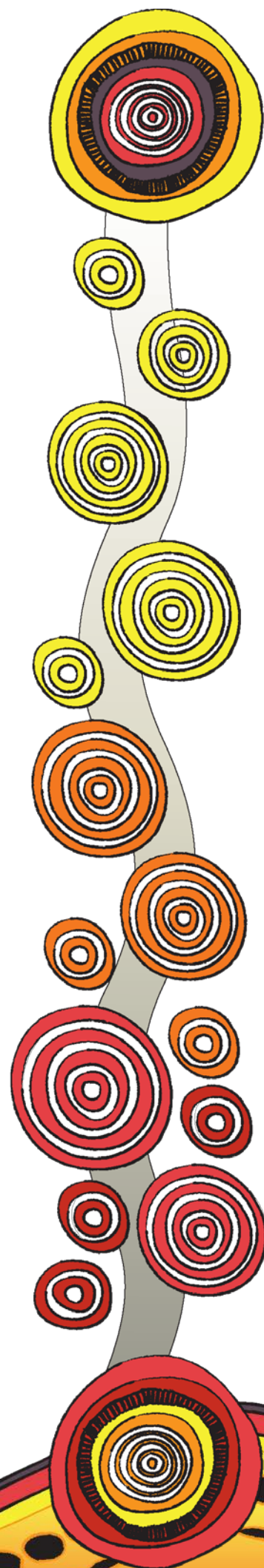
What were the results of this study?

Our results showed that for Aboriginal women 5 years after diagnosis their risk of death from breast cancer was higher than for non-Aboriginal women. After taking into consideration many factors that could have had an effect on the survival outcomes of these women, Aboriginal women still had a 30% higher risk of dying from their breast cancer compared to non-Aboriginal women. We also found that Aboriginal women were more likely to have other chronic health conditions when their breast cancer was diagnosed than non-Aboriginal women.

We found that Aboriginal women were less likely to receive surgical treatment for their breast cancer. Other existing chronic health conditions, distance to health facilities and socioeconomic disadvantage did not greatly influence the chances of Aboriginal women having surgery.

How was this study done?

We analysed the medical records of 288 Aboriginal and 27850 non-Aboriginal women with breast cancer. We collected and compared these women's demographic, disease and surgical treatment details.



Recommendations

- The health care system needs to ensure that Aboriginal women have appropriate access to the surgical treatment and adjuvant therapies for breast cancer.
- Efforts should be made to reduce the numbers of women with comorbidities in the communities.
- Further research is required to fully understand breast cancer survival differences between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women.
- There needs to be more practical efforts to increase the participation of Aboriginal women in breast screening programs in NSW.

Key message: Preventing comorbidities and increasing rates of surgical treatment may increase breast cancer survival for NSW Aboriginal women.

Further information

This research summary has been developed from *“Increasing rates of surgical treatment and preventing comorbidities may increase breast cancer survival for Aboriginal women”*. This paper can be accessed online at: www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2407/14/163/

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www.cancercouncil.com.au/aboriginalcancer

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