

Never returned to screening rates, by GP Divisions in South Australia

The benefit of screening mammography will only be realised if the population of women aged 50 to 69 returns to BreastScreen SA for free screening every two years.

Despite a range of strategies employed by BreastScreen SA to encourage screening every two years (see overleaf), there are some women who never return to BreastScreen SA for rescreening. Table 1 below indicates the never returned to screening rates by South Australian GP Division. Note that care should be taken when interpreting percentages for Divisions with very small numbers of women screened.

**Table 1: Never returned to screening rates by GP Division, for women aged 50 to 67
(screened 1 July 2001 to 30 June 2003)**

Division of General Practice	First screens			Subsequent screens		
	Women screened *	Women never returned	% never returned	Women screened *	Women never returned	% never returned
Adelaide GP Divisions						
Adelaide Central & Eastern	1428	311	21.8%	9636	749	7.8%
Adelaide Hills	550	129	23.5%	3460	295	8.5%
Adelaide North East	1605	296	18.4%	11947	900	7.5%
Adelaide Northern	1012	239	23.6%	9028	799	8.9%
Adelaide Southern	2458	525	21.4%	21535	1760	8.2%
Adelaide Western	1402	338	24.1%	12701	1039	8.2%
Total	8455	1838	21.7%	68307	5542	8.1%
Other GP Divisions						
Eyre Peninsula	318	74	23.3%	3447	329	9.5%
Flinders and Far North	136	45	33.1%	1258	142	11.3%
Limestone Coast	377	54	14.3%	3739	259	6.9%
Mid North Rural	269	36	13.4%	2871	186	6.5%
Murray Mallee	114	22	19.3%	1884	115	6.1%
Riverland	299	42	14.0%	2110	134	6.4%
The Barossa	183	37	20.2%	1853	137	7.4%
Yorke Peninsula	146	32	21.9%	1760	163	9.3%
Total	1842	342	18.6%	18922	1465	7.7%
All divisions	10297	2180	21.2%	87229	7007	8.0%

Analysis

Table 1 shows that for the total Adelaide GP Divisions, the percentage of women who never returned for rescreening following their first screening mammogram (21.7%) was higher than that for subsequent screening mammograms (8.1%). This was similar for the total Other GP Divisions - 18.6% of women never returned for rescreening following their first screening mammogram, compared to 7.7% following their subsequent screening mammograms.

*Women screened in the 2001/2002 and 2002/2003 financial years who are eligible for rescreening. Consistent with BreastScreen Australia's National Accreditation Standards, women aged 68 and 69 are excluded in the table above, to allow for the impact of not inviting women to attend for rescreening when they reach 70 years of age. Hence, the never returned to screening rates are calculated for women aged 50 to 67, not 50 to 69 (the target age group for screening).

Please turn over

After their first screening mammogram, the percentage of women who never returned for rescreening was higher for total Adelaide GP Divisions (21.7%) than for total Other GP Divisions (18.6%). After attending for a subsequent screening mammogram, there was not a large difference between the never returned rate for total Adelaide GP Divisions (8.1%) and total Other GP Divisions (7.7%).

Of all Adelaide GP Divisions, the percentage of women who never returned for rescreening following their first screening mammogram ranged from the highest in Adelaide Western (24.1%), to the lowest in Adelaide North East (18.4%). There was very little difference among the Adelaide GPs Divisions in the percentage of women who never returned for rescreening following their subsequent screening mammogram (ranging from 7.5% to 8.9%).

For Other GP Divisions, the percentage of women who never returned for rescreening after their first screening mammogram was highest for Flinders and Far North (33.1%), Eyre Peninsula (23.3%) and Yorke Peninsula (21.9%). These same three rural or remote GP Divisions also had the highest percentage of women who never returned for rescreening after attending for a subsequent screening mammogram.

BreastScreen SA strategies to encourage rescreening every two years

As recommended in BreastScreen Australia's National Accreditation Standards, BreastScreen SA sends invitation letters to each woman aged 50 to 69 at the time they are due for rescreening. These letters are accompanied by a rescreen flier, emphasising the key message "One screening mammogram is not enough to last a lifetime – have one every two years."

Research suggests that two of the most common reasons why women do not attend for rescreening are that they are too busy, and that they found the mammogram painful. BreastScreen SA's rescreen flier also addresses these two common reasons.

Additional strategies BreastScreen SA employs to encourage rescreening include:

- sending reminder letters to women who do not respond to initial routine recall invitation letters for rescreening. Clients receive reminder letters at six weeks, 12 weeks and one year from the initial invitation, if there is no response.
- making personalised phone calls to clients when timing and workload allow, to encourage clients to attend for rescreening. This strategy is particularly successful in rural and remote areas, and is implemented before a mobile screening unit leaves the country location, as the unit will not return for two years, the recommended screening interval.
- reinforcing in all communications the need for screening mammography on a two-yearly basis. The key message in the rescreen flier is emphasised to women, GPs and allied health workers, and the media, through a variety of publications and by verbal means (eg community presentations and professional seminars).
- encouraging GPs to undertake a Clinical Audit Activity, involving an audit of participation in breast cancer screening by the GP's patients in the target age group, and then implementing a variety of strategies to encourage initial attendance and rescreening.

Surveys of women have confirmed that a decision to screen will often be made by a woman in consultation with her GP. BreastScreen SA recognises and acknowledges the important role of GPs in recommending screening to women in the target group 50 to 69.


We thank you for your continued support, and welcome your ideas regarding strategies to increase rescreening at BreastScreen SA every two years. For further information contact:

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IMPORTANT MESSAGE:

ONE MAMMOGRAM IS NOT ENOUGH TO LAST A LIFETIME!

To increase the chances of detecting breast cancer early, you need to have a screening mammogram every two years.

For many reasons, women put off making an appointment for their next screening mammogram.

Some say they are too busy and can't find the time to "squeeze it in".

Some women say it was painful and are reluctant to return. If you experienced pain please let us know, and we'll do our best to make your experience more comfortable next time.

All it takes is 20 minutes every two years. Early detection is your best protection.

So please, don't put off your next screening mammogram.

**Make an appointment today.
Phone BreastScreen SA on 132050.**

* Please turn over for seven translations of this message *

Above: This rescreen flier is posted with every letter inviting women to attend for their second or subsequent screening mammogram. On the reverse side of the flier, the rescreen message appears in Chinese, Greek, Italian, Khmer, Polish, Serbian and Vietnamese.