

Screening women from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds in SA

Breast cancer rates vary around the world, with North America and Northern Europe having the highest rates, and Asia and Africa having the lowest rates. The overall incidence of breast cancer in Australia is comparatively high, and is similar to the rates in Northern Europe.

A 2002 Cancer Council South Australia¹ report shows that most overseas-born women in SA have a higher incidence of breast cancer than women in their parent populations. The only exceptions are women from Germany and Southern Europe, who show a higher incidence in their country of birth. Migration to Australia and adoption of its lifestyle appears to be associated with an increased risk of breast cancer for many culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) women.

The 2001 South Australian Cancer Registry Report² shows that non-Caucasian women, and women born in countries where English is not the principal language, had comparatively larger breast cancers at diagnosis in the years 1977 to 2000.

Screening mammography has increased the detection of small cancers for all women participating regularly in the program. Over the last eight years, BreastScreen SA has implemented an active education and recruitment campaign aimed at increasing the participation of eligible CALD women in the screening program.

Participation by CALD women aged 50 to 69 has increased from 47.3% for the 24 months ended 31 December 1996, to 62.5% for the 24 months ended 31 December 2002. Participation rates have increased since 1996 for all language groups where comparative data is available.

**Table 1: Screening participation rates for women aged 50 to 69³
(24 months to 31 December 2002)**

	Participation rates (%)		
	Metropolitan	Rural and remote	All SA
All women	65.0	67.5	65.7
CALD women	62.5	62.3	62.5

Table 1 indicates that the overall participation rate for CALD women (62.5%) is marginally lower than the rate for all women in South Australia (65.7%). Note that 90.4% of CALD women aged 50 to 69 live in the metropolitan area.

BreastScreen SA aims for 70% participation in screening by all women in the target age group.

**Table 2: Screening participation rates for language groups with more than 500 women aged 50-69*
(24 months to 31 December 2002)³**

Language group	Population	Screens	Participation rates (%)
Italian	6760	4120	60.9
Greek	3987	2629	65.9
German	1600	989	61.8
Former Yugoslav states	1225	786	64.2
Polish	1001	582	58.1
Chinese	923	556	60.2
Dutch	773	452	58.5
Vietnamese	679	468	68.9

*For information on other language groups, contact BreastScreen SA.

Table 2 indicates that the Greek, Former Yugoslav states and Vietnamese language groups have a higher participation rate than other language groups.

In order to benefit from mammographic screening, women are advised to participate every two years. Re-screen rates indicate the percentage of women who return for screening within 27 months of their previous screening mammogram. BreastScreen SA aims to re-screen >75% of Round 1 women within 27 months of their first screen, and >90% of women having their subsequent screens ('Round 2+').

Table 3: Re-screen rates for women aged 50-69⁴

	Re-screen rates (%)	
	Round 1	Round 2+
All women	67.6	82.3
CALD women	60.6	79.0

In general, women attending for their first re-screen ('Round 1') have a lower re-screen rate than those attending for their second and subsequent re-screens ('Round 2+'). Table 2 shows that CALD women have lower re-screen rates than all women. This suggests that CALD women may need extra encouragement to continue participation in screening mammography.

It is important to encourage all women to have screening mammograms every two years. One screening mammogram is not enough to last a lifetime.

BreastScreen SA has an active recruitment campaign for CALD women - for details, see page 4 of this newsletter.

We are also keen to assist GPs in recruiting CALD women to regular screening. We welcome recruitment ideas, and encourage GPs to recommend two-yearly screening to all women without breast symptoms in the target age group.

For specific information about BreastScreen SA's CALD Recruitment Campaign, please contact:

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 CALD Project Officer
 The Cancer Council South Australia
 PO Box 929
 UNLEY SA 5061
 Phone: (08) 8291 4168 Fax: (08) 8291 4268
 Jelena is available on Mondays to Wednesdays during business hours.

For translated brochures, contact Jelena or BreastScreen SA:

Phone: (08) 8274 7100 Fax: (08) 8373 4395
 or email Karen Shepherd, Promotions and Education Manager,
 BreastScreen SA, at this address: karen.shepherd@dhs.sa.gov.au

Translated brochures can also be downloaded from the BreastScreen SA website: www.breastscreen.sa.gov.au

1. The Incidence of Female Breast Cancer in South Australia by Country of Birth. The Cancer Council South Australia. July 2002.
2. Epidemiology of Cancer in South Australia. Incidence, Mortality and Survival 1977 to 2000. Cancer Series no 23. Department of Human Services, South Australian Cancer Registry, 2001.
3. Based on population data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2001 Census.
4. These re-screen rates represent the percentage of women aged 50 to 69 who returned for screening within 27 months of their previous screening mammogram conducted in 1999.



Above: BreastScreen SA's CALD Project Officer, Jelena Poljak-Fligic (at right), with representatives of the Filipino community, following a presentation at the Migrant Resource Centre.