

Early evaluation of an organised mammography screening program in Greece 2004–2009

[Effie Simou^a](#), [Dimitrios Tsimitselis^c](#), [Maria Tsopanlioti^c](#), [Ioannis Anastasakis^c](#),
[Dionisios Papatheodorou^c](#), [Georgia Kourlaba^a](#), [Panagos Gerasimo^d](#), [Nikos Maniadakis^b](#)

^a Centre for the Prevention of Breast Cancer, General Oncology Hospital “Agiou Anargyroi”, 17, Laodikeias Ave, 11528 Ilisia, Athens, Greece

^b Department of Health Services Management, National School of Public Health, Athens, Greece

^c X-ray Department, General Oncology Hospital “Agiou Anargyroi”, Athens, Greece

^d Department of Oncology, General Oncology Hospital “Agiou Anargyroi”, Athens, Greece

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Abstract

Objective

The aim of the current study was to present early performance indicators of a breast cancer screening program in Greece.

Methods

Between March 2004 and July 2009, 9621 women aged between 40 and 69 years were recruited into programme on a voluntary basis. The participating women were residents of two adjacent administrative regions of Greece. Several performance indicators were calculated for the first and subsequent screen, separately.

Results

A total of 9621 mammograms were 1st screens and 4462 were subsequent screens. The attendance rate was almost 1.5%. The technical repeat rate was 1.7%. On the 1st screen, the recall rate was 11.4%, while the recall rate of the subsequent screens was 5.5%. The vast majority of detected cancers were invasive and only the 1/7 of cancers was identified as DCIS. As concerns tumour size of invasive cancers, the 1.9% and 16.7% was unknown, in the first and subsequent screen, respectively. Moreover, 38.5% and 44.4% of cancers detected in the 1st and subsequent screen, respectively, were less than 15 mm in diameter. Almost 1/5 of diagnosed cancers were interval cancers.

Conclusions

This breast cancer screening programme is the first one in Greece and the attendance rate is extremely low. Taking into account that an organised screening programme may benefit women with a reduction in breast cancer mortality, there is an urgent need to develop a national-based screening programme, to increase participation and to improve the information system used to monitor programme performance.

Keywords

- Mammography screening programme;
- Breast cancer;
- Greece