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• The Breast Health Global Initiative (BHGI)



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BHGI Guideline Development

Background

Breast cancer is the most common cause of cancer related death for women worldwide. Breast cancer lethality is highest among economically disadvantaged countries. While major progress has been made to improve breast cancer outcomes in developed countries, resource constraints limit the application of early detection, diagnosis and treatment strategies in most of the world.

Resource-constrained countries lack the financial resources to implement optimal breast health care programs. As a result, breast care guidelines from economically privileged regions such as the U.S. and Western Europe have limited utility in low-level or mid-level resource countries. Instead, these countries need to implement breast cancer control programs that are appropriate for their country's resources and competing health care needs. Evidence-based guidelines can define strategies by which economically practical incremental improvements can be sequentially introduced within the context of resource constraints to create measurable improvements in health care administration and outcome.

Mission Statement

The Breast Health Global Initiative (BHGI) strives to develop evidence-based, economically feasible, and culturally appropriate guidelines for underdeveloped nations to improve breast health outcomes.

BHGI Guideline Principles

1. Resource-constrained countries have differing financial needs, resource limitations, social constraints and competing illness profiles that frame how national breast health care programs should be implemented.
2. Evidence-based guidelines from wealthy countries define optimal goals for resource-constrained countries, although these countries commonly lack the fundamental infrastructure that is required for direct implementation.
3. Health care systems cannot be transformed at once.
4. Improvements in early detection, diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer require organized, sequentially implemented steps to achieve improved outcome.
5. The development of international evidence-based breast health care guidelines oriented to developing countries of the world with low-level and medium-level financial resources is a crucial step toward improving breast health care and cancer treatment in these countries.
6. It is possible to define evidence-based "best practices with limited resources" for breast healthcare for use in countries where access to healthcare is challenged, breast cancer awareness is limited and cultural barriers need to be overcome.
7. Guidelines for countries of limited resources may require alternate strategies for care to those adopted in wealthy countries to allow sequential steps in improvement provided that those alternate strategies are not defining a "lowered" standard of care for that country.

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Global Summit Guideline Development Conferences

Guideline Purposes

- Define principles in breast health care application in resource-constrained countries.
- Provide a structural framework for change and improvement in health-care delivery
- Cultivate international dialogue and an understanding based upon need and resources.
- Establish a benchmark for growth and improvement through outcomes analysis.

Global Summit 2002 (Seattle)

The BHGI held the first biennial Global Summit Consensus Conference on International Breast Health Care held in Seattle, Washington in October 2002 to establish breast health guidelines to address how care may best be provided in countries where significant gaps in health care resources exist. The guideline development followed consensus panel analysis of evidence-based breast care modeling. Based on definitions created by the World Health Organization (WHO) for national cancer programs, panels of breast cancer experts representing 17 countries and 9 world regions created guidelines to address early detection, diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer in countries with limited health care resources. The breast health care guidelines were published as a Breast Journal supplement in 2003 and have been made available in an unrestricted fashion on the Internet for worldwide access. To date, these are the only written consensus guidelines that specifically address issues of breast care implementation in countries of limited resources.

Global Summit 2005 (Bethesda)

With extended multilateral sponsorship of national and international collaborating organizations, the BHGI guidelines were re-examined, revised and extended at the biennial "Global Summit Consensus Conference on International Breast Health," January 12-15, 2005. The NCI Office of International Affairs in Bethesda, Maryland hosted this second iteration of this guideline process. Several national and international groups

agreed to support the conference as collaborating organizations: WHO, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the National Cancer Institute (NCI)/Office of International Affairs, the American Society for Breast Disease (ASBD), and the International Union Against Cancer (UICC). In order to implement these guidelines in practice, a separate but integrated effort needed to be made to establish a core resource for epidemiologic outcomes analysis to be developed in conjunction with guideline revision and expansion.

Global Summit Consensus Conference

Participants: Physicians, scientists, healthcare providers, and advocates who are representatives of world and regional health organizations, governmental health ministries, international organizations, countries and regions throughout the developing and developed world, with expertise in breast cancer screening/early detection, diagnosis and treatment, personal experience in health care delivery in countries with limited health care resources.

2005 Objectives: Approximately 50 international experts gathered from around the world in related fields of breast cancer screening, surgery, oncology, radiation therapy, pathology/cytology, and health economic analysis, to review and update the 2003 international breast health care and cancer treatment guidelines for developing countries. These breast care and cancer treatment experts convened for four days to develop consensus statements about breast care and cancer treatment oriented to developing regions in the world. Daily sessions consisted of specific topics within the topic of the four panel sections: 1) Early Detection and Access to Care, 2) Diagnosis and Pathology, 3) Cancer Treatment and Allocation of Resources, 4) Health Care Systems and Public Policy. The updated guidelines will be published in a second monograph in the Breast Journal in the September/October 2005 issue, will be made available on the internet, and that site will be linked to the WHO website, which receives 50 million hits per month.

The BHGI is a structure for linkages, research and pilot projects through interdisciplinary communication, cooperation and alliance building via the Global Summit Consensus Conference, on-going communications, website and research and demonstration projects between three core groups, which include the following:

- Clinicians and governmental health care agencies (health care systems, physicians, scientists and government agencies);
- Advocacy and non-governmental organizations (communication, patient advocacy, public education);
- Public health researchers (outcomes analysis, economic modeling, demonstration projects, social impact studies)

Organizational Relationships

The Breast Health Global Initiative (BHGI) is an ongoing project based at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center to develop economically feasible, scientific and culturally appropriate guidelines for underdeveloped nations to improve breast health outcomes.

Sponsoring Organization

World renowned in cancer research and a global leader in the field with the mission of the elimination of cancer as a cause of human suffering and death, the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center Public Health Sciences Division goal is to identify strategies

that would ultimately reduce the incidence of and mortality from cancer and other diseases.

Co-Sponsoring Organization

The Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation is a global leader in the fight against breast cancer through its support of innovative research and community-based outreach programs. The Komen Foundation is fighting to eradicate breast cancer as a life-threatening disease by funding research grants and supporting education, screening and treatment projects in communities around the world.

Collaborating Organizations

- World Health Organization (WHO)
- National Cancer Institute (NIH/NCI)
- Middle East Cancer Consortium (MECC)
- World Society for Breast Health (WSBH)
- International Union Against Cancer (UICC)
- American Society for Breast Disease (ASBD)
- International Society of Breast Pathology (ISBP)
- International Society of Nurses in Cancer Care (ISNCC)
- Pan American Health Organization (PAHO/Division of WHO)
- International Atomic Energy Agency/Division of Human Health (IAEA)
- Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research (AHPSR/Division of WHO)
- International Network for Cancer Treatment and Research (INCTR)

RELATED PUBLICATIONS

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5. Anderson BO; Braun S; Lim S; Smith RA; Taplin S; Thomas DB. Early detection of breast cancer in countries with limited resources. *Breast J*, May-Jun 2003; 9 Suppl 2:S51-59.
6. Vargas HI; Anderson BO; Chopra R; et al. Diagnosis of breast cancer in countries with limited resources. *Breast J*, May-Jun 2003; 9 Suppl 2:S60-66.
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OTHER CO-INVESTIGATORS

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