



Transforming Cancer Services Team for London (TCST)



BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH October 2019

To	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • London Cancer Alliances • CCG Cancer Clinical Leads, Commissioning Managers for Cancer, CCG Comms teams • GP Practices • STP Cancer Programme Leads, Cancer SROs • Public Health Leads • London Pharmacy Leads • HLP Communications Team
Subject	TCST Cancer charity awareness campaigns briefing for information – October 2019

This month is Breast Cancer Awareness Month

This annual campaign in October highlights the importance of breast awareness, education and research worldwide. Breast cancer charities have published a variety of accessible information to support primary care and to raise awareness with patients. Below are links to some of the information provided by charities. As this is a worldwide awareness day there is also broad coverage on social media [#BreastCancerAwareness](#) [#wearitpink](#)

- ❖ [CoppaFeel! in GP Surgeries](#)
- ❖ [Raising awareness of signs and symptoms of breast cancer](#)
- ❖ [Breast cancer in women over 70](#)
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Breast Statistics

There were 5,727 new diagnoses of breast cancer in London in 2017 and the latest data suggests approximately 55,000 Londoners are living with a diagnosis of breast cancer.

Patients who are diagnosed early have the best chance of curative treatment and long term survival. The most recent survival data for breast cancer shows a one year survival of 95.2% and a five year survival of 85.0%.

Breast cancer screening saves lives. However, in London less than two thirds of women attended their screening in 2017/2018 (63.3%) which was also a reduction compared to the previous year (2016/2017, 64%).

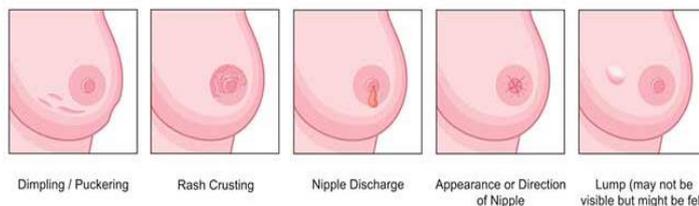
Black women in England are more likely to be diagnosed at a later stage with breast cancer compared to white women. Data from Cancer Research UK (CRUK) and Public Health England (PHE) for 2012/13 showed that late-stage disease is diagnosed in around 25% and 22% of black African and black Caribbean women with breast cancer, respectively. This figure is 13% for white breast cancer patients.

Signs and Symptoms of Breast Cancer

Common breast cancer signs and symptoms include:

- a lump or swelling in the breast, upper chest or armpit – you might feel the lump but not see it
- a change to the skin, such as puckering or dimpling
- a change in the colour of the breast – the breast may look red or inflamed
- a change to the nipple, for example it has become pulled in (inverted)
- rash or crusting around the nipple
- any unusual liquid (discharge) from either nipple
- changes in size or shape of the breast

**BREAST
CANCER
NOW** The research
& care charity



Information and Resources for Primary care

CoppaFeel! in GP surgeries

CoppaFeel! are here to support and enable both healthcare professionals and non-clinical staff to promote the breast awareness message. They can provide materials for patients, resources for the surgery waiting room and information for all staff to encourage the nation to start checking their boobs.



Healthcare professionals, play an important role in diagnosing breast cancer early. They can have a great influence earlier on in the journey, encouraging healthy checking habits.

Encouraging young women to check their breasts

Research shows young women claim doctors have the most influence in encouraging non-checkers to start (CoppaFeel! Quarterly Research 2018) <https://coppafeel.org/at-surgeries/>

We want to make sure that all young women between the ages of 18-35 who visit their GP surgery, leave informed about the importance of checking their boobs. That is why we have designed the materials and resources below to help you to educate, encourage and empower your patients to start coppin' a feel.

Information for non-clinical staff

Practice managers, receptionists and admin staff also play an important role in looking after the wellbeing of patients, find out how CoppaFeel! can support your surgery below.

Order the surgery pack which includes further information for patients on how to be breast aware and how to register for our reminder services. <https://coppafeel.org/order-our-materials/>

Request free digital resources to display in waiting/consultation rooms. This includes A4 posters and information screen slides. <https://coppafeel.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/GP-Posters.pdf>

Breast Cancer in Women Over 70

Women over the age of 70 don't always realise that their risk of breast cancer increases as they get older. Many women are also not aware that they can still go for breast screening by requesting an appointment when they stop automatically being invited for breast screening.

About a third of all breast cancers are diagnosed in women over the age of 70. However, only a small proportion (9%) of these are found through breast screening, compared to nearly 50% in women aged 50-70.

It is therefore important to remind older women of access to screening and encouraged to be breast aware, knowing the signs and symptoms of breast cancer and how to check their breasts.

Finding breast cancer at an early stage can often lead to simpler and more effective treatment and this is as true for women over 70 as any other age group.

<https://breastcancernow.org/about-us/news-personal-stories/breast-cancer-women-over-70>

Breast Cancer in Black Women

A study¹ published in the Social Science and Medicine journal found a relatively low level of awareness about the prevalence of breast cancer among black women. The study was based on a series of 20 focus groups with 100 black women aged between 25-50. Many of the women referred to “the whiteness of the media coverage of breast cancer”.

The journal highlighted that despite cancer incidence being lower in black women, survival rates were also lower, black women who develop breast cancer are more likely to do so at a younger age than white women and it is likely that it will be a more aggressive form.

A photography exhibition titled “Black Women Rising” was the UK's first all – black female cancer portrait exhibition held in Peckham in March of this year, it focused on the effects cancer has on black women including their mastectomy and surgery scars, with the aim of raising awareness of the disease in the community and getting more black women diagnosed.

Black Women Rising is now a lottery funded project, raising awareness of breast cancer amongst black women. <https://linktr.ee/blackwomenrisinguk>



An event “**Lets Talk About...Black Women and Breast Cancer**” focusing on raising awareness of the signs and symptoms of breast cancer, how to perform a self examination as well as listening to experiences of survivors, information about screening and how professionals can raise awareness in minority groups is taking place on 26th October in London and is free to attend. Click here to register for tickets

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/lets-talk-about-black-women-and-breast-cancer-tickets-65924334459>

¹ Brown, T. Dyck, I. Greenhough, B. Raven-Ellison, M. Dembinsky, M. Ornstein, M. Duffy, S. (2017) Fear, Family and the placing of emotion: Black women's responses to a breast cancer awareness intervention. Social Science & Medicine: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2017.10.037>

Breast Cancer in Transgender Women

New research suggests that transgender women (people assigned male sex at birth who identify as women) undergoing hormone treatment have an increased risk of breast cancer compared to cisgender men (people assigned male at birth who identify as men).

According to a study² carried out by researchers from the University Medical Centre in Amsterdam, trans women are around 47 times more likely to develop breast cancer than cis men.

Over the course of the study, 15 cases of invasive breast cancer (breast cancer that has the potential to spread to other areas of the body) were detected in 2,260 transgender women that the researchers were following. In cisgender men, over the same period of time, only 0.32 cases of breast cancer would be expected to be detected.

This is why scientists suggest transgender women to be 47 times more likely to develop breast cancer, however 15 out of 2,260 still represents a very small number of cases³. The study also showed that trans men have a lower breast cancer risk than cis women.

It is therefore important to raise the awareness of regular breast checks with transgender women within your practice population who are undergoing hormone treatment.

Breast screening

<https://breastcancer.org/about-us/news-personal-stories/transgender-women-have-increased-risk-breast-cancer>

NHS Screening Guide for trans and gender diverse people

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/623309/Transgender_cross_programme_screening_leaflet.pdf

Does this briefing work for
you?

Click here to take our 3
minute survey

² Blok, C. J. M. et al. (2019) Breast cancer risk in transgender people receiving hormone treatment: nationwide cohort study in the Netherlands. *BMJ* doi: <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.11652>

³ CRUK <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-us/cancer-news/news-report/2019-05-16-transgender-women-have-increased-risk-of-breast-cancer-compared-to-cisgender-men>