

OPTIMISING EARLY BREAST CANCER DETECTION IN AUSTRALIA

Background

There is growing interest in more risk-based, personalised approaches to breast cancer detection and screening, driven by evolving research on stratified risk, advances in breast imaging technologies and increased stakeholder interest.

An illustrative example is the growing interest in mammographic density, which is an established risk factor for both breast cancer and reduced mammographic accuracy. However, there is no conclusive evidence nor scientific consensus on how mammographic density should be measured and combined with other risk information, how best to communicate findings to women, and optimal management of women in high and low risk groups.

Aim

The Australian Government Department of Health has funded Cancer Council Australia to explore options for risk-based, personalised approaches to breast-cancer screening in Australia. The 13-month project (due for completion June 2019) is assembling evidence to help build consensus on optimal clinical pathways for women in particularly high and low risk groups.

The project will produce a suite of consensus statements, fact sheets and summary outcomes, and recommendations for ongoing work.

Methods

Key activities to support the project's aims include:

1. SUMMARIES OF EVIDENCE

The project is generating a set of evidence summaries, with a focus on what is currently known for groups of women at different levels of risk. The summaries will cover five key topics:

- (i) Population-level validation of risk assessment tools (including any of questionnaire, mammographic density and genetic information), for both breast cancer risk and mammographic accuracy.
- (ii) Current clinical outcomes by risk group both within and outside the BreastScreen Australia program, including detail on tumour characteristics (subtype, tumour size etc.) wherever possible.
- (iii) Overdiagnosis estimates for different risk groups.
- (iv) The potential clinical benefits and harms of current and alternative screening modalities for different risk groups.
- (v) The relative costs, benefits and harms of risk-based breast cancer screening strategies as estimated by modelling studies.

2. ENVIRONMENTAL SCANS

The project is undertaking environmental scans to help understand the context of the current screening program and clinical practices outside the program, such as existing practices around risk assessment tools, current trends in risk-based clinical practices, and stakeholder

activity relating to risk-based practices. These scans are covering the two broad topics of current clinical practice and current stakeholder activity. Information is being drawn from national statistical data, statistics collected by clinical groups, journal and grey literature, stakeholder websites, and extensive stakeholder consultation. The project will also scope international best practice as part of a summary review.

The project is coordinated by the Cancer Council Australia with regular input and advice from an independent, multidisciplinary Expert Management Group (EMG) currently comprising 30 members.

The project team will also convene a stakeholder forum to share information and facilitate inclusive discussion; expert reference groups with a focus on specific topics may also be established as part of the consultation process.

Project Leadership Team

| Name | Role | Affiliation |
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| Dr Carolyn Nickson | Project Lead | Senior Research Fellow, Cancer Council NSW and Melbourne School of Population and Global Health, University of Melbourne |
| Professor Bruce Mann | Co-Chair, Expert Management Group | Director of Breast Services, Royal Melbourne Hospital and Professor of Surgery, and Director of the Breast Tumour Stream, Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre |
| Ms Vicki Pridmore | Co-Chair, Expert Management Group | CEO, BreastScreen Victoria |
| Prof Karen Canfell | Project Consultant | Director of Research, Cancer Council NSW and Chair, Screening and Immunisation Committee, Cancer Council Australia |
| Mr Paul Grogan | Project Support | Director, Public Policy and Knowledge Management, Cancer Council Australia |
| Dr Adelaide Morgan | Project Coordinator | Clinical Guidelines Network, Cancer Council Australia |

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