

Breast Cancer in Asians and Pacific Islanders

Important Statistics

Cancer is a major cause of death among Asian/Pacific Islander (A/PI) women. Breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed form of cancer in this group. Unfortunately statistics on Asian/Pacific Islanders should be interpreted with caution because of the lack of high quality, complete and available data.

When compared to white women:

- The overall reported breast cancer incidence rate for A/PI is 90.7 compared to 123.6/100,000 for white women. (National Center for Health Statistics [NCHS], 2010).
- The mortality rate for breast cancer for A/PI is about half of the rate reported for white women (12.2 vs. 23.5 deaths/100,000). (NCHS, 2010).
- A/PI women are less likely to have had mammography in the past two years (25 percent vs. 29 percent as measured in four states, CA, HI, NJ and WA). (Kaiser Family Foundation, June 2009).
- Incidence rates of invasive breast cancer declined among A/PI women (-0.8 percent per year during 1997-2006), but this reduction was less than that experienced by white women during the same time period (-2.2 percent per year). (American Cancer Society, 2009).
- The incidence rates for large tumors remained constant for A/PI women between 2001 and 2004 but dropped 10.2 percent in white women. (Hausauer, A.K., Keegan T.H., Chang E.T., Clarke C.A., 2007).

Additional Background Information

- Asian/Pacific Islanders encompass a widely diverse group of people who differ in language, culture and length of residence in the U.S. Some Asian groups have lived in the U.S. for generations such as the Japanese and Chinese, while others are more recent immigrants, such as the Hmong and Laotians. Most Pacific Islanders were born in the U.S. (Reeves, T. & Bennett, C., 2003).
- In 2007 approximately 14.7 million Asian/Pacific Islanders (A/PI) resided in the U.S. Fifty-one percent of them were women. (American Cancer Society, 2009).
- A/PI women are less likely to have health coverage (13 percent of white women vs. 18 percent of A/PI women have no health coverage). (Kaiser, June 2009).
- A/PI women are less likely to have a personal doctor (13 percent vs. 19 percent). (Kaiser, June 2009).

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