

# Integrating prevention and control of women's cancer into health systems – *taking a whole woman approach*



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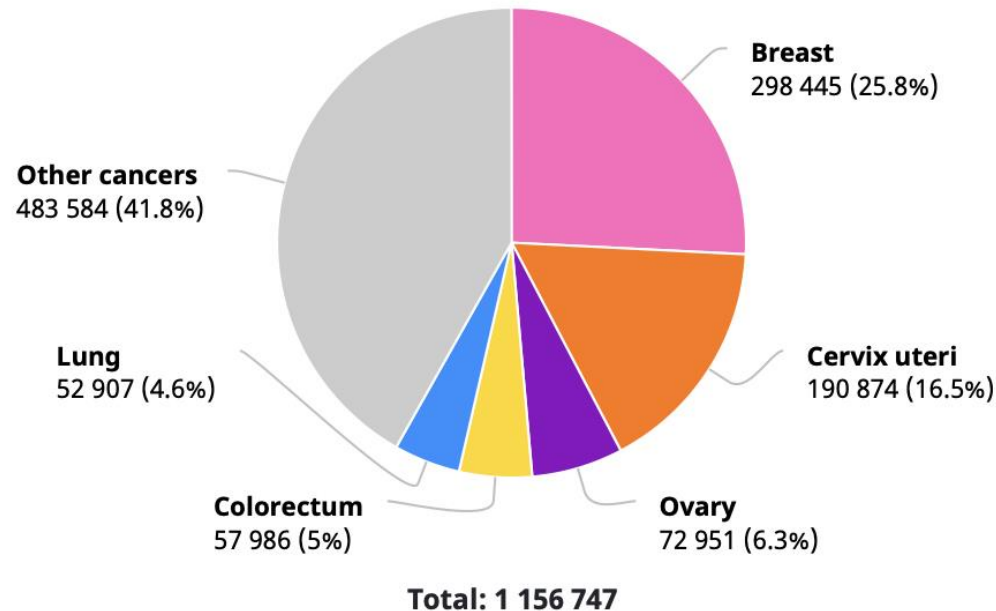
**For the, Virtual 5<sup>th</sup> Annual South East Asia Breast Cancer Symposium  
Sunday, 01 August 2021**

# Are we taking the wrong approach to cancer awareness?

**1:89** – the life time risk of cancer in adults in the WHO SEA region

**1:43** – the life time risk of cancer in adults in the WHO SEA region

Number of new cases in 2020, females, all ages



# Making silos of cancer types, a concern and a missed opportunity

*Many women, myself included, are religious about having periodic PAP tests and mammograms. But we tend to think of colon and rectal cancers as men's diseases. They do not pass over women, I now know all too well, and early detection can make a huge difference to survival prospects.*



Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Associate Justice Supreme Court, USA

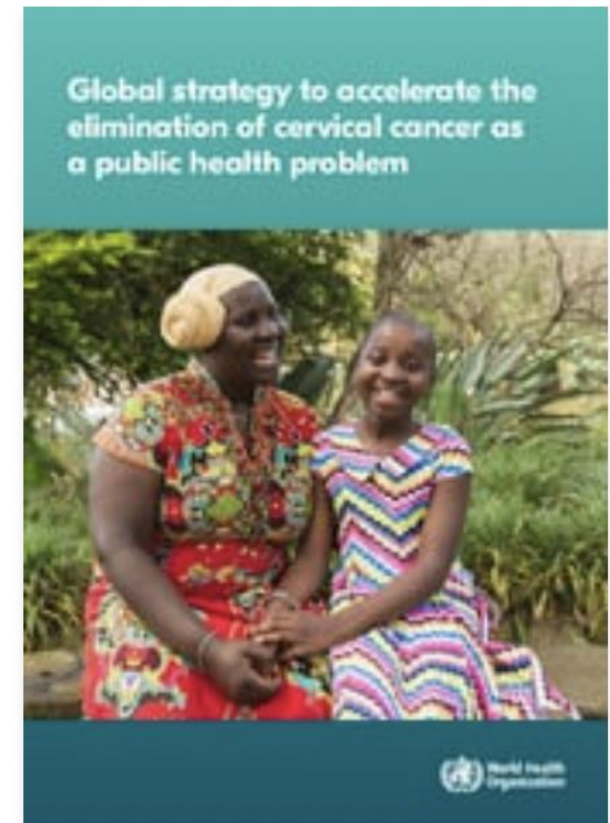
*Remarks for Women's Health Research Dinner, May 7, 2001*

# Policies for womens cancers - a priority for shaping cancer prevention and control

- For the current generation
- For the future generation
- For the whole of society

The vision of a **world free of cervical cancer**

- a new opportunity to shift our communities to a prevention and early detection mindset



# Actively engaging the NCD community and integrate information and services



- Common risk factors: tobacco, alcohol, physical inactivity, poor nutrition, overweight and obesity **ADD HPV infection and no access to early detection of key cancers**
- Get the message to those most vulnerable: those with lower education, less digitally connected, the poor and rural communities
- Knowledge, but also the ability to act – policies to support maximising individual action



# Elimination strategy is an opportunity for integration with CMH and HIV communities/services

- We need to be proactive
- Policy should be driving integration at all service levels
- Learn from these communities about reaching high risk and vulnerable groups
- General cancer awareness, not just cervical cancer
  - Lactation and breast cancer risk
  - CBE and follow up (lab)
  - Referral

**World Cancer Day**  
4 February

### Cancer Signs and Symptoms

Detecting cancer early is one of the most powerful ways we can help save lives. With so many different types of cancers, the symptoms are varied. Yet, there are key signs and symptoms to look out for.

- Unusual lumps or swelling, which are often painless and may increase in size
- Persistent coughing, breathlessness or difficulty swallowing
- Changes in bowel habits e.g. constipation, diarrhoea and/or blood found in the stools
- Needing to urinate urgently, more frequently, or being unable to go when you need to or experiencing pain
- Unexpected bleeding including from the vagina, anal passage, or while urinating or when coughing
- Unexplained and unintentional weight loss over a short period
- Fatigue, extreme tiredness and a severe lack of energy
- New mole or changes to a mole in terms of size, shape, or colour and if it becomes crusty or bleeds or oozes
- Unexplained or ongoing pain or pain that comes and goes
- Unusual breast changes in size, shape or feel, skin changes or pain
- Feeling less hungry than usual for a prolonged period of time
- A spot, sore, wound or mouth ulcer that won't heal
- Persistent or painful heartburn or indigestion
- Heavy, drenching night sweats

If you experience any of the signs and symptoms, don't be afraid to seek medical advice urgently.

[worldcancerday.org](http://worldcancerday.org)

# Elimination strategy – an opportunity for fresh thinking on equity of access

*Women we want to target for cervical cancer screening are healthy, leading busy lives, especially those of low socio-economic status. We are making it as easy as possible for women to fit screening into their hectic schedule*



Professor Yin Ling Woo  
University of Malaya

*Program ROSE (Reducing Obstacles to cervical ScrEening)*

- *Self-sample option (no speculum)*
- *Quick registration and App*
- *HPV DNA test and systematic follow up and referral*
- *Empower women*
- *Taking services into the community*
- *Scalable and resilient model*

# Elimination strategy – an opportunity for establishing a life course approach

*My daughter Grace and I wanted to send a strong signal on cervical cancer prevention to all Kenyans by stepping up to be one of the first in the queue for the HPV vaccine.*



Millicent Kangona  
Cervical cancer survivor, Nairobi, Kenya

- *Childhood vaccine catch up*
- *Life skills, sexual education*
- *Early start on cancer health literacy in schools*
- *Empower of a new generation*
- *Champions of elimination, breast health and other cancer goals*



# Role of civil society organisations – breast cancer groups taking the lead

- Culturally appropriate messaging created by those who understand the culture is more likely to overcome barriers to screening and treatment.
- Breast cancer networks – challenged to expand their work and experience with communities and navigation of patients to cervical cancer and beyond.
- Emphasising the health system strengthening needs and opportunities for all cancers
  - Make sure diagnosis, prompt treatment through surgery and radiotherapy as well as cancer medicines are in focus.
  - Not leave out survivorship, management of metastatic disease and palliative care.
  - Integration into UHC approaches

# Elimination strategy – a chance to build an enabling environment

- Implementation research in and with communities and women
- Breakdown stigma and shift to a prevention mindset
- Maximise touchpoints women have with the health service for improving cancer health literacy
- Focus on access for poor and vulnerable groups, financial protection for cancer patients
- Prioritise access and outcomes of highest risk girls and women
  - ✓ EQUITY
  - ✓ INTEGRATION
  - ✓ QUALITY OF CARE
  - ✓ For the current generation
  - ✓ For the future generation
  - ✓ For the whole of society

# The Lancet Commission – women's health and cancer

*Ophira Ginsburg and Richard Horton, July 2020*

- What is not acknowledged is the disproportionate impact of cancer on the lives and livelihoods of women, and the downstream impacts this creates for societies.
- Until those in positions of power value the health and wellbeing of every girl and woman as equal to that of men, and until they act on this commitment, this seemingly achievable goal will never be attained.

# Thank you for your kind attention



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