



Detecting Breast Cancer: Advances in Diagnosis and Screening

Luis Gram*

Department of Plastic Surgery, University of Southern Denmark, Odense, Denmark

*Corresponding author: Luis Gram, Department of Plastic Surgery, University of Southern Denmark, Odense, Denmark; E-mail: luisgram@usdn.de

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Description

Breast cancer is one of the most common types of cancer affecting women, with millions of cases diagnosed each year. Despite the significant progress that has been made in breast cancer treatment, it continues to be a leading cause of death among women worldwide. It is important for women to be aware of the risks and symptoms associated with breast cancer so that they can detect it early and receive prompt treatment. Breast cancer can develop due to a variety of factors, including age, genetics, lifestyle, and reproductive history. Women who are over 50 years of age are at a higher risk of developing breast cancer, as are those who have a family history of the disease. Women who have had breast cancer in the past are also at an increased risk of developing the disease again. Other risk factors for breast cancer include smoking, excessive alcohol consumption, obesity, and a lack of physical activity. Hormonal factors such as the early onset of menstruation, late menopause, and never having given birth to a child can also increase a woman's risk of developing breast cancer. The most common symptom of breast cancer is a lump or mass in the breast tissue, which may be painless or painful. Other symptoms may include swelling or thickening of the breast, changes in the skin of the breast or nipple, and discharge from the nipple.

Diagnosis

Breast cancer is typically diagnosed through a combination of physical examination, imaging tests, and a biopsy. A mammogram, which is an X-ray of the breast tissue, is the most commonly used screening test for breast cancer. Other imaging tests, such as an ultrasound or Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) may also be used to evaluate the breast tissue. If a suspicious lump or mass is detected, a biopsy will be performed to determine whether it is cancerous or not. A breast biopsy involves the removal of a small sample of tissue from the breast, which is then examined under a microscope. The treatment of breast cancer depends on the stage of the disease as well as other factors such as the patient's age and overall health. Treatment options may include surgery, radiation therapy, chemotherapy, hormone therapy, or targeted therapy. Surgery is the most common treatment for breast cancer and may involve the removal of the entire breast (mastectomy) or just the cancerous tissue (lumpectomy). Radiation therapy uses high-energy X-rays to kill cancer cells and may be used after surgery to kill any remaining cancer cells. Chemotherapy involves the use of drugs to kill cancer cells throughout the body, while hormone therapy is used to block the effects of hormones that may be promoting the growth of cancer cells. Targeted therapy is a newer type of treatment that specifically targets the proteins or genes that are involved in the growth and spread of cancer cells. This type of treatment may be used in combination with other treatments to improve their effectiveness.

Conclusion

Breast cancer is a serious disease that affects millions of women each year. However, with early detection and prompt treatment, many women are able to survive and thrive after a breast cancer diagnosis. It is important for women to be proactive about their breast health, and to be aware of the risk factors and symptoms associated with breast cancer. Regular breast cancer screenings, such as mammograms and clinical breast exams, can help detect the disease early, when it is most treatable.

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