

ACTIVITIES OF TURKISH FEDERATION OF BREAST DISEASE SOCIETIES

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Dear Colleagues,

As you know, breast cancer incidence has been increasing in the world. According to the records of the IARC (International Agency for Research on Cancer), while the number of new diagnosed breast cancer patients was 1,150,000 in 2002, this number will reach 1,500,000 in 2010. And, it has been estimated that there will be a 60% increase in the next 10 years. If we look at all the breast cancers, 55% of them were diagnosed in developed and 45% was diagnosed in low-middle income countries (LMCs). But, there is a reverse relationship regarding mortality rates. 55% of breast cancer related deaths have been seen in LMCs. The reason of low mortality rate in developed countries is early diagnosis with organized population based screening and effective therapies. With the aid of screening mammography, the rates of ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS), non-palpable breast cancer, and decrease in breast cancer mortality have reached to 25%, 75%, and 35% respectively. The increase in breast cancer incidence in LMCs is related with westernizing life and increased endocrine risk factors. High mortality rate for breast cancer in LMCs is related with lack of organized population based screening programs, late diagnosis, and inadequate treatments.

Breast cancer incidence has also increased in Turkey, especially in Western Turkey. This increase has related with changing life style (westernizing life- nutritional habits, working conditions, stress, less exercise, obesity) and endocrine related factors [early menarche, late menopause, nulliparity, age at first birth (>30), hormone replacement therapy, induced abortion, less breast feeding etc.]. In a study performed in 1992 in İzmir, breast cancer incidence was found 24/100,000. But it was estimated that this rate reached to 37/100,000 in 2006 (50/100,000 in western and 25/100,000 in eastern Turkey). Important studies and projects have been performed for early diagnosis and effective treatment of breast cancer by Cancer Control Department of The Ministry of Health of Turkey and Turkish Federation of National Breast Societies.

Breast Cancer Early Detection and Screening Sub-Committee has been funded by The National Cancer Advisory Board to establish early detection and screening standards of breast cancer in Turkey. This sub-committee has been performed regular meetings with experts on breast cancer epidemiology, diagnosis and treatment to evaluate breast cancer incidence, screening programs,

and treatment modalities, and to promote studies on these subjects. Cancer Control Department also funded 84 Early Cancer Diagnosis, Screening and Education Centers (KETEM) for opportunistic and organized screening of breast cancer in 81 provinces in Turkey by 2008. The number of these centers has been increasing regularly.

However, the infrastructure and expenditures created by the government is not enough for early diagnosis and effective treatment of breast cancer. To achieve these aims, health workers dealing with this issue (doctors, nurses, medical technicians, etc.) have a very important role. Especially physicians in KETEM and specialists related with breast cancer in the State Hospitals (general surgeons, radiologists, pathologists, medical oncology and radiation oncology specialists, etc.) should update their breast cancer-related information and increase breast cancer awareness in the targeted population.

One of the most important purposes of Turkish Federation of Breast Diseases Societies which was funded in 2001 is to provide continuous education of health care workers (physicians, specialists, nurses, technicians etc.) and target population for early diagnosis and effective treatment of breast cancer. As a result, early detection, screening, and modern treatment of breast cancer will be realized in Turkey. Turkish Federation of Breast Diseases Societies organized numerous national breast congresses, consensus meetings, conferences, and regional postgraduate courses for family practitioners, specialists on breast cancer, nurses, and women. The Journal of Breast Health is one of its publications. It has been published for 5 years and included by TUBITAK, Index Copernicus, and EBSCO Publishing. The journal has been reached to thousands of readers and published every 3 months. In addition to these activities, our federation has a breast cancer registry since 2005 and registered 15,000 breast cancer patients from the every region of Turkey.

After several discussions with Cancer Control Department, we have decided to organize "National Breast Cancer Postgraduate Courses" every two months in different cities in Turkey. At the beginning, these courses will include physicians in KETEM and breast cancer related specialists in the State Hospitals (general surgeons, radiologists, pathologists, medical oncology and radiation oncology specialists, etc.). They will be educated on epidemiology, screening, diagnosis, and treatment of breast cancer

and later, other health workers (nurses, technicians, midwives etc.). The first course was performed in Bursa in February 21, 2010, by including physicians working in Bursa, Balıkesir, Yalova and Bilecik. The second one will be performed in Eskişehir in May 15, 2010.

I hope and expect that these courses will help to early diagnosis and effective treatment of breast cancer in women with your great support. The details of the course programs and other information can be reached at our web site (www.mhdf.org) or by emailing our secretary (rumisabirce@gmail.com).

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