

දුරකථන) 011 2669192 , 011 2675011
தொலைபேசி) 011 2698507 , 011 2694033
Telephone) 011 2675449 , 011 2675280

ෆැක්ස්) 011 2693866
பெக்ஸ்) 011 2693869
Fax) 011 2692913

විද්‍යුත් තැපෑල) postmaster@health.gov.lk
மின்னஞ்சல் முகவரி)
e-mail)

වෙබ් අඩවිය) www.health.gov.lk
இணையத்தளம்)
Website)



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சுவசிரிபாய
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சுகாதார, போசணை மற்றும் சுதேச வைத்திய அமைச்சு
Ministry of Health, Nutrition & Indigenous Medicine

General Circular Letter No: 01 - 32/2015

All Provincial Directors of Health Services,
All Regional Directors of Health Services,
All Heads of Institutions,
Medical Officers of Health

World Breast Cancer Awareness Month – October 2015

Breast Cancer Awareness Month is commemorated worldwide during the month of October every year. Programmes which support early detection, treatment as well as supportive care for breast cancer survivors are conducted during this month with the objective of increasing public awareness and action for early detection and prompt treatment of breast cancers.

Even though breast cancer is the commonest cancer among women it has very good prognosis if detected in the early stages. The five-year survival rate is higher, if detected and treated early and promptly which would result in high cure rates, greater possibilities of conservative surgery preserving body image and less aggressive treatment options.

In Sri Lanka, an average of 2500 new cases of breast cancer are detected annually and account for approximately 25% of all female cancers detected. Therefore programmes targeting early detection of breast cancers need to be prioritized at all levels of care.

Early detection of breast cancer needs to be promoted through increasing awareness on abnormal symptoms and signs of breast cancer, regular breast – self-examination (BSE) and clinical breast examination (CBE) by a trained health worker. These approaches are taught to health care workers at the training programmes at various levels and relevant knowledge is disseminated to general public too. In addition, a series of guidelines have been formulated and communicated in the form of handbooks to primary care medical officers and other primary healthcare workers.

In spite of these strategies a considerable proportion of cases of breast cancers are detected in the late stages probably due to deficiencies in communication to facilitate behavior change for practicing self breast examination & undergoing clinical breast examination.

You are hereby kindly requested to conduct the under mentioned activities in your area with a view to commemorate breast cancer awareness month with the support of the Medical Officer/Non-Communicable Diseases, Medical Officer/Maternal & Child Health, Medical Officer/Public Health, Medical Officer/ Health Education and all Medical Officers of Health.

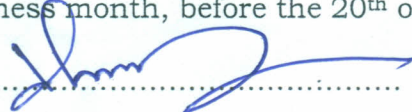
1. Lectures, discussions and **training of trainer (TOT) programmes** for Medical Officers of Health, Primary Care Medical Officers and General Practitioners with the participation of resource personnel at provincial or district level (E.g. Consultant Surgeons, Consultant Oncosurgeons, Consultant Radiologists, Consultant Oncologists, Consultant Pathologists, Consultant Community Physicians).
2. **In-service training programmes** for primary health care staff with special focus on early detection of breast cancer at each Medical Officer of Health (MOH) area.
3. **Leadership programmes** on early detection strategies of breast cancer for female heads of government institutions (E.g. Schools, District & divisional secretariat office, office of the Provincial /Zonal Director of Education, Pradeshiya Sabha, Urban or Municipal Councils etc).
4. **Awareness programmes** on early detection of breast cancers for female staff of government and private sector institutions.

5. **Community participatory programmes** such as a walk, an exhibition on breast cancer at the areas of public gathering such as railway stations, bus stand, market, 'Sunday pola' etc.
6. **Enhanced activities related to early detection of breast abnormalities** at Well Women Clinics, Healthy Life Style Centres, Surgical Clinics, Breast Clinics and Mobile Cancer Screening Clinics.

Please note that health education materials such as leaflets, flash cards on self breast examination, mannequins on self breast examination etc distributed by the National Cancer Control Programme could be utilized for these awareness programmes.

Your leadership, guidance and active participation in this national endeavour would be much appreciated.

Please submit a report to the Director/ National Cancer Control Programme, 555, Public Health Complex, Elvitigala Mawatha, Narahenpita, Colombo 5 on the activities conducted by your institution with regard to Breast Cancer Awareness month, before the 20th of November 2015.


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Dr. Palitha Mahipala
Director General of Health Services

Dr. P. G. Mahipala
Director General of Health Services
Ministry of Health, Nutrition & Indigenous Medicine
"Suwasiripaya"
385, Ven. Baddegama Wimalawansa Thero Mw.
Colombo 10.

- Cc: 1. Hon. Minister of Health
2. Hon. Deputy Minister of Health
3. All Provincial Ministers of Health
4. Secretary, Ministry of Health
5. Additional Secretary (MS)
6. All DDGs
7. Director – NCCP, MCH, NCD Unit, HEB, PHC, NIHS, PHSD