

WHO Global Breast Cancer Initiative (GBCI): Informal partners' forum

**Theme: Leveraging on partnerships in women's health
for the Global Breast Cancer Initiative**

Virtual meeting

21 March 2024, 15:00–17:00 (CET)

Background

Breast cancer is the most diagnosed cancer worldwide accounting for one in eight cancer diagnoses representing nearly a quarter of all cancer cases in females. Additionally, 16% or 1 in 6 cancer deaths in women is due to breast cancer with a higher mortality observed in low- and middle-income countries. In 2017, the World Health Assembly passed the resolution [WHA70.12](#) Cancer prevention and control in the context of an integrated approach. Recognizing the rising burden of breast cancer, the World Health Organization (WHO) launched the [Global Breast Cancer Initiative](#) (GBCI) in 2021 and its [implementation framework](#) in 2023.

The GBCI aims to reduce global cancer deaths by 2.5% every year to avert 2.5 million deaths in the next 20 years. This can be achieved through three pillars of action:

- Pillar 1. Health promotion for early detection (prevention and pre-diagnostic interval)
- Pillar 2. Timely breast diagnostics (diagnostic interval)
- Pillar 3. Comprehensive breast cancer management (treatment interval)

However, there is still little progress in achieving the goals of the GBCI, and many women continue to die from the disease threatening the achievement of sustainable development goals on reducing premature mortality from noncommunicable diseases by one third by 2030 and the achievement of universal health coverage. There is, therefore, an urgent need to combine efforts through partnerships and collaborations to strengthen the GBCI implementation if we are to achieve the goal of averting 2.5 million deaths in the next 20 years.

Purpose

This meeting aimed to bring stakeholders together to deliberate and engage in a shared vision of GBCI and its implementation within countries. The forum provided an opportunity for partners to share best practices in implementing the GBCI and brainstorm, recommend and advise on what is required to accelerate the implementation of the WHO GBCI to achieve the goal of reducing global cancer deaths by 2.5% every year. It is intended that through these forums, the breast cancer agenda will gain traction as an important topic of global interest, collaboration, research and innovation.

Objectives

1. To describe the status of the WHO Global Breast Cancer Initiative and its future direction with prioritization of its implementation and country impact.
2. To provide a forum for multisectoral stakeholders to recommend and propose to WHO strategic directions, interventions, and priorities for possible implementation within the framework of GBCI.
3. To align with, and get feedback from, partners on areas of collaboration and partnerships to advance breast cancer control at the global levels as part of women's health, rights and health equity agenda.

Audience

The stakeholders included representation from the WHO headquarters and regional offices, UN agencies including the tripartite cancer agencies (International Agency for Research on Cancer and International Atomic Energy Agency), other UN partners, development banks, development and implementation partners, public health researchers, academia, nongovernmental organizations, and patient groups in cancer control, among others.

Knowledge transfer

Participants had access to WHO resources available on the GBCI webpage:

1. [Global breast cancer initiative implementation framework](#)
2. [Global breast cancer initiative implementation framework: assessing, strengthening and scaling up of services for the early detection and management of breast cancer: executive summary](#)
3. [WHO Guide to cancer early diagnosis](#)
4. [WHO Guide for establishing a pathology laboratory in the context of cancer control](#)
5. [WHO Model list of Essential Medicines – 23rd list, 2023](#)
6. [Setting Up a Cancer Centre: A WHO–IAEA framework](#)
7. [WHO list of priority medical devices for cancer management](#)
8. [IARC Atlas of breast cancer early detection](#)

Related

The GBCI partners' meeting report will be available soon.