

PRESS RELEASE

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DEPRIVATION RESPONSIBLE FOR 450 BREAST CANCER DEATHS EACH YEAR

DEPRIVATION could be responsible for around 450 deaths from breast cancer every year in England as women in lower income groups are likely to be diagnosed when the disease is more advanced, and treatment is less effective.

Research presented today at the National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI) Cancer Conference in Liverpool, and funded by Cancer Research UK, examined the effect deprivation has on the stage at which women are diagnosed with breast cancer, and how many lives are lost as a result.

The researchers, based at the Universities of Leicester and Cambridge, looked at the stage of breast cancer in over 20,000 women diagnosed between 2006-2010 using data from the National Cancer Registration Service (Public Health England). They then calculated the number of lives that would be saved within 5 years of diagnosis if the stage at diagnosis for all deprivation groups matched those of the most affluent women.

The study estimates that 40 lives would be saved every year in Eastern England if these socioeconomic differences were removed, equivalent to around 450 lives saved in the whole of England every year.

Dr Gary Abel, statistician at the University of Cambridge and study author, said: "These avoidable deaths are not due to differences in the response to treatment, or the type of breast cancer. Rather these are deaths that might be avoided if cancer was caught as early in women from deprived backgrounds as those from more affluent backgrounds.

"The reason for this inequality may be a combination of these women being less aware of breast cancer symptoms and a greater reluctance to see their GP."

Dr Julie Sharp, head of health information at Cancer Research UK, said: "It's important for all women to be aware of how their breasts normally look and feel, because we know that early diagnosis is one of the most important factors in whether breast cancer treatment is effective. If women do spot any changes to their breasts then going to the GP promptly could make all the difference."

ENDS

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Notes to editors

View the conference abstract here:

<http://conference.ncri.org.uk/abstracts/2013/abstracts/A118.htm>

About the NCRI Cancer Conference

The National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI) Cancer Conference is the UK's major forum for showcasing the best British and international cancer research. The Conference offers unique opportunities for networking and sharing knowledge by bringing together world-leading experts from all cancer research disciplines. The ninth annual NCRI Cancer Conference is taking place from 3–6 November 2013 at the BT Convention Centre in Liverpool. Roche is the principal sponsor of the 2013 NCRI Cancer Conference.

For more information visit conference.ncri.org.uk

About the NCRI

The National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI) was established in 2001. It is a UK-wide partnership between the government, charity and industry which promotes cooperation in cancer research.

NCRI members are: the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI); Association for International Cancer Research; Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council; Breakthrough Breast Cancer; Breast Cancer Campaign; Cancer Research UK; Children with Cancer UK; Department of Health; Economic and Social Research Council; Leukaemia & Lymphoma Research; Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research; Macmillan Cancer Support; Marie Curie Cancer Care; Medical Research Council; Northern Ireland Health and Social Care (Research & Development Office); Prostate Cancer UK; Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation; Scottish Government Health Directorates (Chief Scientist Office); Tenovus; Welsh Government (National Institute for Social Care and Health Research); The Wellcome Trust; and Yorkshire Cancer Research.

For more information visit www.ncri.org.uk

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