

**"Breast Cancer
Screening and Early
Detection".**

**Hranush Hakobian
Armenian-American Wellness
Center**

Date: 07/30/02





Introduction

- I. The significance of this conference.**
- II. Post-Soviet Era Public Sector Reforms.**
- III. Challenges and obstacles NIS countries face in the transition period.**
- IV. Public Health sector reforms in Armenia.**





ARMENIAN-AMERICAN WELLNESS CENTER

Specifics of the Center

- **The Mammography Center is the first of its kind in Armenia**
- **Founders of the Center are not health care professionals**
- **There was no medical base when it was established and everything was built from scratch.**
- **The Center is equipped with the “State of the Art” U.S. equipment and the modern supplies, including using the latest “Kodak” films.**
- **Almost all the staff of the center is trained in the USA.**
- **The Center is a training site for residents of the Medical University.**
- **The Center has employed 30 people.**



ARMENIAN-AMERICAN WELLNESS CENTER

Specifics of the Center

- The Mammography Center is the first of its kind in Armenia





Armenian-American Wellness Center

Program Strategies

- I. **Introducing screening for early detection of breast and cervical cancer**
- II. **Providing free services/examination to poor women**
- III. **Raising public awareness about the importance of early detection of breast and cervical cancer**
- IV. **Quality assurance and quality improvement of the screening procedures and practices**
- V. **Establishing a mammography school with high standards.**
- VI. **Developing partnerships for the future of the center.**



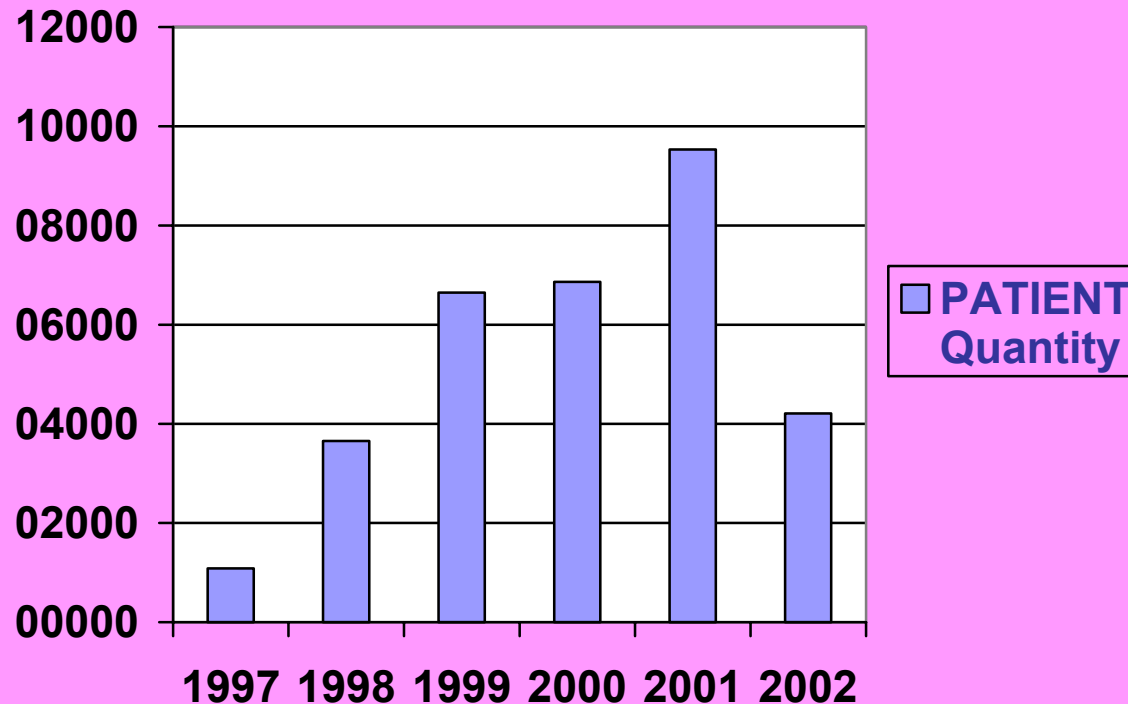


Program Strategies

(continued)

I. Introducing screening for early detection of breast cancer.

33 754 women were examined in the Centre by ultrasound mammography examination out of which 1291 have been detected having cancer. The dynamics of the past 5 years is quite sound.





Program Strategies

(continued)

Screening for early detection of the breast cancer.

It is also interesting to look at the vulnerability of different age groups to the disease

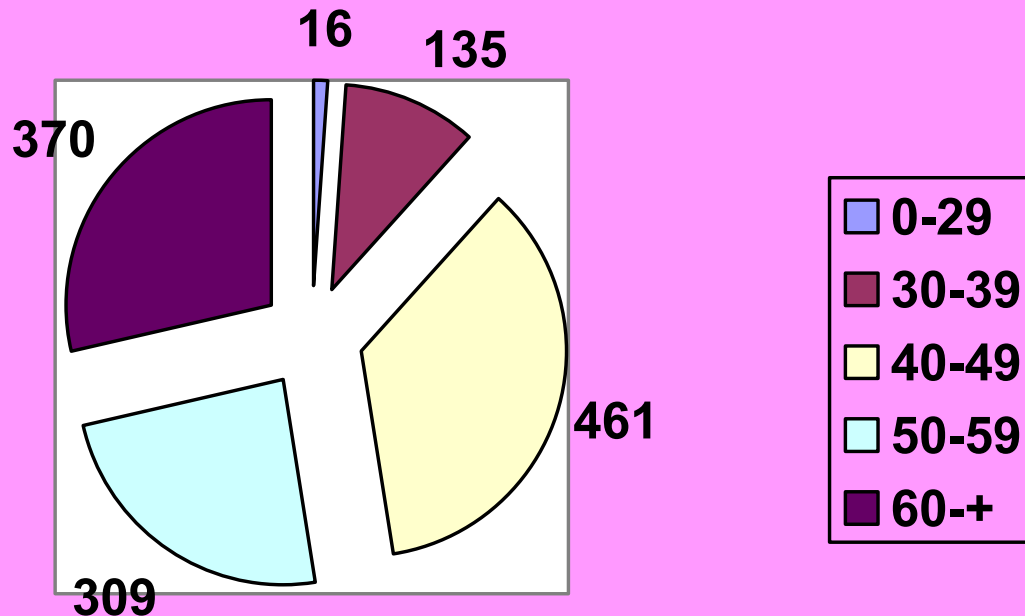
0-29 – 16 women

30-39 – 135 women

40-49 – 461 women

50-59 – 309 women

60 and over-- 370 women





ARMENIAN-AMERICAN WELLNESS CENTER

II. Providing free services/ examination to poor women

- **Fund-raising in US communities**
- **Funding free of charge examinations to the disabled of 1st, 2nd and 3rd categories and those who had a breast cancer surgical operation.**
- **Organizing visits of the team of medical doctors and facilitating the examination in rural areas twice a week.**
- **Providing free consultation by qualified medical staff.**
- **Building partnerships with various international organizations to address needs of specific vulnerable target groups (Save the Children, UNHCR, Jinitian Foundation, Armenian community).**





ARMENIAN-AMERICAN WELLNESS CENTER

Raising public awareness to promote screening

1. Publishing and distributing leaflets on breast monthly self-examination.
2. Publishing and distributing information leaflets on cervical cancer.
3. Promoting regular media (TV, radio, the print) reflections and programs on the issue.
4. Distributing posters in Yerevan and in the country.
5. Organizing fund-raising events.
6. Establishing support groups of survivors to support their psychological rehabilitation.



ARMENIAN-AMERICAN WELLNESS CENTER



Health Walk

1. **Organizing annual Breast Cancer Awareness Campaigns jointly with the Ministry of Health Care in October. In the framework of the campaigns various actions are organized, including:**
 - health walks
 - charity concerts
 - exhibitions
 - school essay contests
2. **Mobilizing communities including NGOs, local medical communities, the media and grassroots organizations through discussions and workshops.**
3. **Providing services in October for 50% discount rate.**





DEVELOPING A PARTNERSHIP AND PERSPECTIVES

- **The western US management culture was introduced.**
- **The Government provided a 5 story building to the Centre considering the importance of its program to extend the Centre. 2 Branches are already established.**
- **Though only 15 000 women are taking this examination currently about 400 000 women should take the screening and adequate funds and equipment, as well as branches in 5 regions are necessary**
- **The work on establishing a pathological anatomy laboratory will be completed soon.**
- **A sponsor donated mobile clinics to facilitate examinations in the regions. The Mobile clinics will become operational this Fall.**



DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIP AND PERSPECTIVES

- **A mammography school with reputable traditions was established in Armenia that prepared over 50 residents.**
- **The Internet and LRC are a good basis for education of the medical staff and to get the information updates worldwide.**
- **Partnership and relations with Washington General Hospital and John Hopkins and Baltimore Clinics are developed further.**





CHALLENGES AND OBSTACLES



- **Lack of mammography systematic network**
- **High poverty rate and lack of ability to pay for medical services, as well as the absence of funds envisaged in the state budget for the breast screening.**
- **The expenses of the centre are double its revenues and the need of funding is crucial for further development and extension of the program.**
- **Psychological barriers to conduct breast examination among women.**
- **Lack of qualified medical staff in the regions with specialization in oncology.**
- **Delays in education reform and licensing. Lack of adequate interest towards this issue in education curricula.**
- **Low efficiency of post surgical rehabilitation treatment.**
- **Different attitudes in informing the partner about having cancer.**