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## Breast cancer cases on the rise

Kounteya Sinha, TNN | Feb 26, 2011, 12:14AM IST

NEW DELHI: Breast cancer cases have doubled in India in the last two decades. The number of women estimated to be dying of breast cancer every year has also been steadily rising.

As against an estimated 48,170 women who died of breast cancer in 2007, the number breached the 50,000 mark in 2010. The figure for the year was put at 50,821.

Uttar Pradesh recorded the highest number of breast cancer deaths among states in 2010 -- 8,882 -- followed by Maharashtra (5,064), Bihar (4,518), West Bengal (4,095), Andhra Pradesh (3,863), Madhya Pradesh (3,179) and Rajasthan (3,097).

Gujarat recorded 2,632 deaths, Kerala 1,618, Haryana 1,118 and Orissa 1,885. Delhi recorded an estimated 810 deaths due to breast cancer in 2010 compared to 779 in 2009 and 749 in 2008.

When it comes to states recording low breast cancer mortality rate, Lakshwadeep recorded the lowest with three deaths followed by Andaman and Nicobar Islands with 19 deaths. The north-eastern states also showed low levels of breast cancer deaths. Sikkim recorded 30 deaths, Mizoram 49 and Arunachal an estimated 63 deaths.

MoS health S Gandhiselvan on Friday said, "According to Indian Council of Medical Research, there is a significant increase in the incidence of breast cancers in various urban population based cancer registries between 1982 and 2005."

Globally, breast cancer is the most common female cancer accounting for an estimated 1.4 million cases each year, with more than half of the 400,000 breast cancer deaths occurring in low and middle income countries.

A landmark analysis of cancer cases in Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Bangalore between 1982 and 2005 (24 years) by ICMR had found that while cervical cancer cases -- earlier the most common -- dipped, in some cases by almost 50%, the incidence of breast cancer doubled.

While Bangalore saw breast cancer cases more than double since 1982 -- 15.8 in a population of one lakh in 1982 to 32.2 in 2005 -- Chennai recorded 33.5 new cases of breast cancer per one lakh women in 2005 against 18.4 in 1982.

Delhi recorded 24.8 new cases of breast cancer a year per 100,000 women which rose to 32.2 in 2005. Mumbai recorded 20.8 new cases of breast cancer per 100,000 population in 1982 which increased by almost 10% in 2005.

Experts say women now marry late and give birth to fewer children, all of which have led to a dip in cervical cancer cases. Ironically, these are the same factors, which have increased breast cancer rates in India.

Western lifestyle, increased consumption of fat products, obesity, late marriages, delayed child bearing and less number of children being conceived leading to reduced breastfeeding are all believed to be behind this increased risk of breast cancer.

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