



***#Mammography\_Not\_Banned\_In\_Switzerland***

***#Mammography\_Is\_Safe\_&\_Saves\_Lives***

***#Breast\_Imaging\_Society\_India\_&\_Swiss\_Radiologists\_Issue\_Statement***

**In Switzerland, mammography has not been banned** in any way and is widely used in the screening and diagnosis of breast cancer; as population based screening in more than half of the cantons, or as opportunistic screening in the remaining regions.

**BISI supports mammography as an important tool for early detection and diagnosis of breast cancer.**

**Detailed Statement below**

### **BISI Response Statement to Social Media Misconceptions on Screening Mammography**

The Breast Imaging Society, India (BISI) would like to issue a response to the sudden surge of social media messages being circulated about the supposed harms of screening mammography and a **false** declaration of a mammography ban by Switzerland.

Screening Mammography is a global practice in many developed countries of the world for early detection of breast cancer.**(1)** Early detection is known to improve cure rates, save lives and offer scope for less aggressive treatment.

Cancers detected early are associated with lower death rates. Unfortunately, despite the lower incidence of breast cancer in India compared to other developed countries, more women in our country present at advanced stages reflecting poorer 5-year survival rates at 66.1% compared to 89.5% and 90.2% in Australia and USA respectively. **(2)**.

Later stage detection of breast cancers may be one of the factors contributing to poorer cancer survival.

Breast Cancer can be detected by clinical breast examination (when large enough to be felt) and by different imaging techniques, such as mammography, ultrasound and magnetic resonance imaging at a much earlier stage. Mammography can be involved as a diagnostic tool in women with symptoms, or as a screening tool in asymptomatic women.

Mammography is an X-ray-based technique used for imaging the breast and is able to detect breast cancers even before they are felt. It involves a **very low dose of radiation** which is far less than the background radiation we are exposed to. It is well within safety limits of permissible radiation exposure and is not detrimental to health and well-being. Compression required during mammography procedure is not associated with upstaging of breast cancer, and this fear is totally unfounded. **(3)**

Generally, a screening test is a tool with potential impact on mortality, has a fair sensitivity and specificity and is affordable and implementable in a given healthcare system. Many large trials have been conducted across the globe, emphasizing the basis and justification for use of mammography as a screening tool. Multiple studies over the past several decades (USA, Sweden, UK) have consistently shown resultant downstaging of breast cancer with a decrease in associated mortality varying from 15 to as much as 30 %. **(4, 5, 6)**

European Breast Guidelines recommend organized screening programs for average-risk women aged 40 to 75 years **(7)** and population-based programs are today active in some European nations, on a national basis or, as in the case of Switzerland, on a cantonal basis, where all residents have access to quality-controlled early cancer detection programmes, whose harmonization and quality assurance are promoted by Swiss Cancer Screening, a central point of reference for institutions, organizations and authorities**(8)**. At the time of publication of the 2022 annual report, 13 cantons have an organized screening program and three are implementing it in the two-year period 2023-2024 **(9)**.

Potential interest may have arisen from **a report published ten years ago by the Swiss Medical Board (SMB), a group whose activity ceased in 2022**. In 2014, the SMB published a biased report of little interest against organized breast cancer screening program (not against mammography, incidentally), but which prompted Swiss Cancer Screening to publish a press release **(10)** which questions the conclusions, the methodology, the consistency of the report as well as its recommendations. The SMB no longer has any activity today and has never updated that report.

**In Switzerland, mammography has not been banned in any way and, indeed, it is widely used in the screening and diagnosis of breast cancer, in the form of**

organized screening in more than half of the cantons, or in the form of opportunistic screening in the remaining cases.

We urge our population to not get swayed by misinformation circulated against screening mammography, and BISI as a society, continues to support mammography as an important tool for early detection and diagnosis of breast cancer.

**Summary** - Breast cancer is a significant concern worldwide, with rising incidence and mortality rates. Screening mammography, a vital tool in early detection, has faced misinformation, including false claims of a ban. However, studies consistently show its effectiveness in reducing mortality rates, especially when combined with clinical examination. In countries like Switzerland, mammography remains a cornerstone of organized screening programs. Despite challenges, opportunistic screening plays a crucial role, particularly in regions without national programs. It's time to separate fact from fiction and prioritize evidence-based breast cancer screening efforts.

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