

MULTIDISCIPLINARY TREATMENT OF BREAST CANCER

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The number of women newly diagnosed with breast cancer in Croatia is over 2,500 a year. Despite advances in diagnostic methods and all forms of therapeutic methods, there is still no clear evidence of decline in breast cancer mortality. The female breast cancer death rate of almost 1,000 cases a year is nearly 40% of the total number of new cases.

The treatment of breast cancer patients has become a public health problem. A prerequisite to a successful treatment is progress in early diagnosis, which can only be achieved through the involvement and effort of the whole society. First, there should be a good national screening program. Although Croatia has one, the response is still insufficient. Further, there should be a multidisciplinary and individual approach that would result in significant improvement in treatment.

Due to the use of biotechnologies, impressive progress in understanding the biology of breast cancer has been made in the last decade. A number of molecular methods available today are applied to identify and use the biomarkers, develop new therapies, and assist in the differentiation between the patients requiring treatment in a very early phase of the disease from those who do not. New drugs and treatment protocols require considerable funds for the best available treatment.

It is also necessary to determine a subgroup of patients with hereditary breast cancer. This identification of patients enables an optimal treatment, follow-up and prevention.

Only if these issues are properly addressed our main goal, reducing breast cancer mortality, can be achieved.