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**LETTER TO THE EDITOR**

## **Rising Burden of Breast Cancer in Pakistan: An Urgent Call for Early Detection and Awareness**

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Dear Editor,

Breast cancer has emerged as the most prevalent malignancy among women in Pakistan, posing a major public health challenge. According to the Global Cancer Observatory (GLOBOCAN 2022), Pakistan has one of the highest breast cancer incidence rates in Asia, with approximately one in every nine women likely to develop the disease in her lifetime [1]. Despite advances in oncology worldwide, Pakistan continues to face high morbidity and mortality due to late presentation, limited screening infrastructure, and inadequate public awareness.

Several factors contribute to this growing burden. Sociocultural barriers often prevent women from seeking timely medical consultation, while the lack of national screening programs limits early detection [2]. Additionally, myths, stigma, and fear surrounding breast cancer diagnosis further delay medical evaluation [3]. In rural areas, access to mammography and oncology services remains scarce, resulting in diagnoses at advanced stages where curative options are minimal.

To address this, there is an urgent need for a national breast cancer control strategy integrating community-based awareness campaigns, primary healthcare involvement in screening, and incorporation of breast health education into women's health programs. Training of healthcare workers in early detection and public education about self-examination and routine check-ups can drastically improve outcomes.

Moreover, the government and non-governmental organizations should collaborate to establish low-cost mobile screening units and telemedicine-based referral systems, ensuring equitable access to diagnostic facilities across underserved areas. Academic institutions and health innovation platforms should play a pivotal role in advocating for evidence-based interventions and awareness programs tailored to Pakistan's cultural context.

Addressing breast cancer requires a multifaceted, preventive approach rather than reliance solely on tertiary care. Early detection, public awareness, and health innovation must be our collective priorities to reduce the burden of this preventable and treatable disease.

### **Competing Interests**

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