

Black women more likely to be diagnosed with late stage breast cancer than white women

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Micrograph showing a lymph node invaded by ductal breast carcinoma, with extension of the tumour beyond the lymph node. Credit: Nephron/Wikipedia

Black African women are nearly twice as likely to be diagnosed with late stage breast cancer as white women in England according to new analysis from Cancer Research UK and Public Health England released today (Wednesday).

Twenty five per cent of Black African women and 22 per cent of Black Caribbean women diagnosed with [breast cancer](#) are picked up at stage three and four.

This compares to thirteen per cent of white British women.

This is the first time data on more specific ethnic groups and their stage at diagnosis from across England has been routinely released, helping to build a clearer picture of who is diagnosed at an early or late stage.

Ethnicity and stage at diagnosis was collected for women diagnosed with breast [cancer](#) in England in 2012 and 2013.

Dr Jodie Moffat, Cancer Research UK's head of early diagnosis, said: "Information about the stage when cancers are diagnosed in the UK has greatly improved in recent years, and it's vital the data continues to be collected and analysed. While there are still gaps, this information provides a useful insight into which [ethnic groups](#) are more likely to be diagnosed with late stage cancer. It's difficult to know exactly what would be behind any differences, but there are likely to be a range of reasons, including possible differences in tumour biology, awareness of symptoms, barriers to seeking help, attitudes to cancer and [breast screening](#) attendance.

Dr Jem Rashbass, PHE Cancer Lead, said: "This analysis will help improve awareness and target treatments. It also shows how vital it is that we collect data is on every person with cancer England, as findings like these are only possible due to the world leading cancer data we have

in this country.

"It is hugely important to catch all cancers, but particularly breast cancer, early. Lumps are not the only sign and women should tell their GP if they notice any changes to their breasts such as nipple discharge or changes to the skin of the breast. Breast screening is offered to [women](#) aged 50-70 and can help detect cancer earlier and improve survival."

Dr Julie Sharp, Cancer Research UK's head of health information, said: "Reducing late stage diagnosis of cancer is a key part of our work to achieve better results for patients, and we want to be sure that any activity is reaching those most in need. Because of the data gaps, we'll need further work to know how accurate the picture is that these results paint. But we are clear that finding cancer at an earlier stage can make a real difference as it means treatment is more likely to be successful. If you notice something that isn't normal for you, or you've a symptom that's not gone away or has got worse, getting it checked out promptly could save your life."

Provided by Cancer Research UK

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