

Breast cancer death rate down 10% in just five years

February 5 2018



Credit: Cancer Research UK

Breast cancer mortality rates have fallen by 10 percent in five years, according to the latest analysis released by Cancer Research UK ahead of World Cancer Day tomorrow (Sunday).

In 2015, 35 women out of every 100,000 in the UK died from [breast cancer](#). Five years before this was 39 women per 100,000.

A better understanding of the genetics of the disease, together with new drugs and surgical techniques, have all contributed to a falling death rate. Research has led to broader uses for drugs such as tamoxifen, as well as the development of newer drugs such as [aromatase inhibitors](#) revolutionising treatment of breast [cancer](#).

Research has helped inform women and their doctors about the risk factors linked to breast cancer and how to reduce the chances of developing the disease to start with. Knowledge of the signs and symptoms has also helped to get breast cancer diagnosed at an early stage when treatment is usually successful.

Mortality rates across all cancer types decreased by 5 percent between 2010 and 2015. The four most common cancer types, breast, prostate, lung and bowel, which account for more than half of all cancer cases, have all seen considerable decreases.

Despite the 'big four' cancer types seeing death rates fall by over 5 percent, the overall rate is tempered by the hard-to-treat [cancer types](#). Survival remains stubbornly low in cancers of the pancreas, brain and oesophagus showing how much research is still needed to lower [mortality rates](#) across the board. Only 1 percent of pancreatic cancer patients survive their disease for ten years or more.

Sir Harpal Kumar, Cancer Research UK's chief executive, said: "It's fantastic to see research saving lives right now, with the rate of women dying from breast cancer dropping year on year. But while the rate of people dying from cancer overall is decreasing, the overall number of people developing and dying from cancer in the UK and worldwide is expected to rise. This is because the population is growing and more of us are living longer.

"This World Cancer Day it's important to celebrate how much things

have improved, but also to renew our commitment to saving the lives of more cancer patients. More still needs to be done to bring down the number of [women](#) affected by breast cancer and to tackle the cancers that are harder to diagnose and treat. By donating and investing in more crucial research we can keep fighting this devastating disease."

Tracey Brader, mum of three from London, was diagnosed with [breast](#) cancer in January 2015 after finding a lump while taking a shower. After going through a mastectomy and chemotherapy treatment, Tracey, aged 56, is now taking tamoxifen and getting her life back to normal.

She said: "The diagnosis was a total shock. The kids were 21, 19 and 14 at the time and I had to wait to tell them as my eldest was doing finals. When we finally had the conversation, they each responded in a different way. It was a challenge to manage their different emotions as well as my own.

"I like to feel like I'm in control and you are waiting for things – results and next steps, there are so many unknowns. I lost my hair, my eyelashes and my eyebrows and I didn't feel like me anymore. It's taken some time to build myself back up but I'm getting there.

"I am so grateful for the treatments available to me and without research things could have ended very differently. It's been difficult but I'm so grateful to still be here with my family and that's why we are supporting Cancer Research UK this World Cancer Day."

Provided by Cancer Research UK

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