



New Survey Shows Half of Hong Kong Women Do Not Check for Breast Cancer Regularly

Early Detection of Breast Cancer Increases Chance of Cure

Hong Kong Cancer Fund and Hong Kong Sanatorium & Hospital Join Hands to Offer Mammograms at a Preferential Rate to Encourage Women to Check Their Breast Health

(Hong Kong – 24 September 2013) Breast cancer is the most common cancer in women worldwide. According to the Hong Kong Cancer Registry, there were more than 3,000 new cases in 2010¹. Breast cancer has the third-highest mortality rate for all types of cancer among Hong Kong women. The medical community recommends women should check their breasts for any abnormalities via mammogram and breast self-examination, as early detection and treatment can reduce the level of difficulty in treatment and the chance of relapse, as well as increase the likelihood of cure. Unfortunately, only one-third of breast cancers are diagnosed in stage 1¹, which indicates that most patients did not detect their breast tumour at an early stage.

Ms. Sally Lo, the Founder and Chief Executive of Hong Kong Cancer Fund (HKCF), said, “Our campaign, ‘Pink Revolution’, aims to raise breast cancer awareness among the general public and to urge women to check their breast regularly. By offering mammograms at a discounted price, we hope to encourage women to build a habit of breast examination so that more instances of breast cancer can be detected and treated early.”

New Survey Indicates that the Hong Kong Women Lack Understanding about Breast Health and Breast Cancer Risk Factors

To help gauge Hong Kong women’s understanding of breast health and breast cancer, the HKCF appointed the Public Opinion Programme, the University of Hong Kong (HKU POP) to conduct a telephone survey, which successfully interviewed more than 500 , aged 18 or above Hong Kong female from August to September 2013.

Survey results indicate: -

¹ Hong Kong Cancer Registry. Female Breast Cancer in 2010. URL: http://www3.ha.org.hk/cancereg/breast_2010.pdf. Accessed on 15 Sep 2013

1. 51% of women do not exam their breasts regularly

About half of the respondents (51%) do not check their breasts regularly, either by themselves or with a doctor.

2. Women do not follow the recommended breast checks schedule

Among those who check their breasts regularly, only about a quarter of them (26%) self-check their breasts once monthly. Only 27% of those who had a clinical breast examination do it every two years.

3. The majority of women are unaware of when they should start to check their breasts

Only 11% of respondents know that women should start self-examinations at the age of 20. Less than one-fifth (18%) of respondents know that women should start mammogram screening from the age of 40. It shows that the public understanding of the breast check-up is poor.

4. Many women think they will never develop breast cancer and therefore do not check their breasts

36% of those do not check their breasts regularly, and nearly half (47%) of those do not do it with a medical professional, do not see the need of doing it or believe “breast cancer will never happen to me”.

22% stated not knowing how to self-check as the reason for not checking. Of those who had not received a clinical examination, 9% claim they have no time and another 9% say the examination is unaffordable.

5. The majority of respondents have poor understanding of breast cancer symptoms

The majority of women (77%) know that lumpiness or dimpling is a symptom of breast cancer. Yet, very few know the following are also breast cancer symptoms:

- Abnormal nipple discharge (24%)
- Persistent pain on or near the breast or under the arm (22%)
- Change of shape or location (7%)

- Change of breast skin texture or rashes found on or near the nipple (4%)

Women could start mammogram screening from the age of 40 and self-checks at 20

The survey found that many Hong Kong women fail to maintain a regular habit of breast examination, no matter whether a self-check or mammogram screening. In addition, women do not pay enough attention to their breast health generally.

Dr Raymond LIANG Hin-suen, Assistant Medical Superintendent and the Director of the Comprehensive Oncology Centre of the Hong Kong Sanatorium & Hospital, said, “The incidence of breast cancer in Hong Kong has doubled in the past 20 years, with one in every 19 women suffering from some form of breast cancer¹. All women should be vigilant and know breast cancer symptoms, as well as check their breasts regularly.”

The current recommendations regarding breast examination are: -

- A woman could start regular mammogram screening at the age of 40, while women at high risk should discuss the best screening schedule with their doctor.
- A woman should consider monthly breast self-examination after her menstrual period from the age of 20.

Dr. Liang remarked, “Women should self-examine their breasts and undertake a regular mammogram to detect any abnormal development. Early detection increases the opportunity for a cure.”

Pink Revolution Launches Mammogram Screening Discount to Encourage Women to Pay Attention to Breast Health

Ms. Sally Lo added, “Through this year’s ‘Pink Revolution’ and the mammogram discount offer, we hope to increase Hong Kong women’s awareness of their breast health and breast cancer risk factor, as well as motivate them to have regular examinations. If breast cancer is found, it can be treated in a timely manner.”

Internationally famous singer Coco Lee is HKCF’s Pink Ambassador, for the second year running. She is helping produce the Pink Revolution campaign poster and short promotional film, as well as participating in interviews and promotion activities. Coco said, “It is of paramount importance for women to undertake regular breast



examinations. No matter how busy I am, I always make time for self-examinations. Through my involvement, I hope to promote greater awareness and understanding of breast cancer among Hong Kong women. Check regularly and prevent breast cancer!"

Coco is also calling on the public to support Dress Pink Day on 25 October and Shop for Pink, to help raise much needed funds for HKCF's free and comprehensive breast cancer support services.

Case Sharing

Ms. Yeung, a breast cancer survivor in her 40s, recalled that she found a distinct lump on a specific area on her right breast in November 2003 (when she was 30s). Feeling strange, she sought a medical examination. Subsequent to palpation, the doctor recommended that she have both a needle and surgical biopsy. The results confirmed that she had stage 1 breast cancer with a small tumour (1.4 cm). She then underwent breast minimally invasive surgery to remove tumor. As she was diagnosed at a relatively young age, her doctor recommended she receive chemotherapy and radiotherapy to prevent a relapse. She has been following up with her doctor faithfully for the past ten years and the breast cancer has not returned.

Prior to diagnosis, Ms. Yeung was aware of breast cancer promotions and the need for regular breast examinations. Yet, she did not follow the advocated schedule as she never thought breast cancer would happen to her. It was lucky that the cancer was found at early stage. She would like to appeal to the public about the importance of regular check-ups and urges don't leave it to chance.

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Notes to Editor

About Hong Kong Cancer Fund

Hong Kong Cancer Fund is Hong Kong's largest cancer support organisation, providing free information, professional guidance, and peer support to anyone living with or affected by cancer. With a network of support spanning the hospital, the community and the home, Hong Kong Cancer Fund's mission is to ensure no one faces cancer alone. Helping to make life better for people touched by cancer, Cancer Fund not only provides vital support to cancer patients and their families, but helps to improve hospital environments, drive public awareness of cancer, and fund local cancer research and training to better the future of cancer care.

Our website: www.cancer-fund.org °

About the Mammogram Offer Scheme

In order to encourage women to take more control of breast health and build a habit of breast examination, Hong Kong Cancer Fund with the Hong Kong Sanatorium & Hospital is offering female members of the public 500 discounted mammograms, starting from 25 September to 31 October 2013. Woman must be a Hong Kong resident, aged 40 or above and have not received any clinical breast cancer screening within the last two years. Eligible applicants can register through the Cancer Fund hotline on 3656 0800. Successful applications can enjoy the mammogram with report interpretation by a physician for the cost of \$600, instead of \$1,600. Limited quota on a first-come-first-served basis.

About Pink Revolution

Hong Kong Cancer Fund's Pink Revolution – Hong Kong's biggest and most comprehensive breast cancer education and fundraising campaign runs every October, in line with international breast cancer awareness month. "Checking your breasts regularly could save your life" is the slogan of this year's campaign and serves to remind women of the importance of regular breast checks. It educates and empowers women to take charge of their own breast health and informs the public that early detection and treatment can dramatically increase the chance of recovery.

Each year, many organizations and companies support the Pink Revolution. This year, nearly thirty renowned brands are supporting Shop for Pink by launching limited edition pink fashion, beauty and lifestyle collections, as well as sensational dining offers. Part of



the proceeds will be donated to the Hong Kong Cancer Fund to support its free breast cancer support services.

Hong Kong Cancer Fund has also organized a Dress Pink Day on 25 October 2013. In addition to wearing pink, participants can make a donation towards Hong Kong Cancer Fund's free breast cancer services. HK\$100 can provide a breast cancer survivor who has just undergone surgery with a Pink Recovery Pack to facilitate a survivor's healing and rehabilitation.

Style maestro Kim Robinson has joined forces with Lane Crawford to invite women to support breast cancer patients with the launch a limited edition set of five luxury lipsticks for charity sale.

For more details, please visit www.cancer-fund.org/pink.