

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

A global survey reported that among 15 Asian countries, the Philippines has the highest breast cancer mortality rate and the lowest mortality-to-incidence ratio. Studies have described socioeconomic factors as one of the major causes for the lack of access to early detection and treatment.

METHODS

In response to this gap in the delivery of services to promote early cancer detection and in line with the Breast Health Global Initiative's call for LMICs to adopt breast cancer screening to the local context, the University of the Philippines – Philippine General Hospital Cancer Institute established the Mobile Breast Cancer Diagnostic Clinic Program, a first in the country -two “pink” vans that are fully equipped to reach far flung areas and provide breast cancer screening strategies are sent out to deliver service such as clinical breast exam by medical and surgical oncologists, health education sessions, and diagnostic procedures (eg. Mammography, biopsy of identified suspicious breast masses, basic laboratories, etc).

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The Pink Vans: Bringing cancer screening closer to home

Key Findings

- In the first 6 months of the program's existence, the “pink” vans were able to visit **3 strategically identified areas** in the country.
- These three tours have **served a total of 189 women** who all underwent mammography.
- Of these women, 18 had their suspicious lesions biopsied. Two-thirds (12) of which were found to be malignant.



RESULTS

In the first 6 months of the program's existence, the “pink” vans were able to visit 3 strategically identified areas in the country. These three tours have served a total of 189 women who all underwent mammography. Of these women, 18 had their suspicious lesions biopsied. Two-thirds (12) of which were found to be malignant. These patients were then referred to our institution for further work-up and management.

CONCLUSION

As the Philippine health department continues to emphasize clinical and self-breast exam as part of its breast cancer control program, efforts like the UP-PGH “Pink Vans” may eventually help supplement the gap in the country's breast cancer screening endeavors with the goal of improving survival by identifying the disease at its earliest stage.

Authors:
Frederic Ivan Ting, MD, Louis Mervyn Leones MD,
Jorge Ignacio MD

University of the Philippines – Philippine General Hospital

Scan to contact author --->

fredtingmd@gmail.com

@fredtingmd

