

Project Information Sheet – Forget Me Not



About Prevent Breast Cancer

Predict. Prevent. Protect. You could call it our mantra. As the only UK charity entirely dedicated to the prediction and prevention of breast cancer, we're committed to freeing the world from the disease altogether. Unlike many cancer charities, we're focused on preventing, rather than curing. Promoting early diagnosis, screening and lifestyle changes, we believe we can stop the problem before it starts. As we are situated at the only breast cancer prevention centre in the UK, we're right at the front line in the fight against the disease.

We predict – by identifying who is at risk of breast cancer

We prevent – by offering preventative interventions, to **stop** breast cancer before it starts

We protect – our goal is to **shield future generations** from breast cancer

Our research falls under four different categories: gene research, early detection and screening, preventative drugs, and diet and lifestyle.

We are a registered with the Charity Commission in England with the Registered Charity Number 1109839.

About this project

Funding Request

Our new **early detection and screening research** is examining the progression of breast cancer in patients with DCIS (Ductal Carcinoma in Situ), in order to better understand over-diagnosis. This is a small, eighteen month project running from 1st September 2019 – March 2021.

The Need

Breast cancer is the most common cancer in the UK, accounting for a staggering 15% of all cancer diagnoses. Across the UK, 150 individuals are diagnosed with breast cancer every day; tragically 32 of them will lose their fight against the disease. Unfortunately, these figures are rising. If trends continue, we can expect a 2% increase in diagnoses by 2034.

Despite this, recently so-called 'overdiagnosis' has featured prominently in the media. This is because improvements in the screening programme have led to cancers being caught at very early stages, which are often treated by surgery of the affected area. These early stage cancers are called 'DCIS' cancers and very little is currently known of why **some of these early stage cancers grow into larger, more aggressive cancers**, and why some of them stay in DCIS form.

Our researchers want to study why this is the case in order to improve the screening process for breast cancer and make women better informed about their personal treatment options.

The Methods

During preliminary work our teams have identified 719 women who were diagnosed with DCIS with no record of surgery between 2002 - 2016. Our teams will gather data about these women including information on patient investigations, treatment, and health outcomes. This data will be collected and analysed by an experienced researcher in order to better understand which conditions lead DCIS to develop into higher grade cancers.

Impact

As well as contributing to an important debate about so-called 'overdiagnosis', this study aims to **help doctors determine which women need surgical removal of the disease to prevent the development of invasive cancers** and which are at a low risk of invasion and could be managed without further intervention.

We believe this study could also better inform screening policy. If very few women with low grade DCIS turn out to develop invasive disease, then high recall and biopsy rates may be counter-productive, resulting in unnecessary patient distress and high costs to the healthcare system. Therefore, it is an extremely pressing and important question.

More Information

For more information about this project, please get in touch with Vicki Wilkinson, our Trusts, Relationships and Research Manager by emailing vicki@preventbreastcancer.org.uk or phoning 0161 291 4402.



Gene Research

Investigating how changes and mutations in genes can affect someone's risk of developing breast cancer.



Early Detection and Screening

Identifying new and unique screening methods to ensure early and accurate diagnoses.



Preventative Drugs

Investigating drugs that can be used as a preventative measure to reduce an individual's risk of developing breast cancer.



Diet and Lifestyle

Research into lifestyle factors that contribute to risk and how diet and exercise can reduce an individual's risk.