

Women Urged To Examine Breasts Monthly

The Jamaica Cancer Society (JCS) is appealing to all women to do monthly breast self examinations and to also visit the Jamaica Cancer Society breast clinic.

Women, aged 40 and older are also being encouraged to do annual mammograms, as statistics show that two thirds of all cases are in women who are 55 years and older. Executive Director of the Jamaica Cancer Society, Mrs. Yulit Gordon, said "mammograms remain the gold standard for detecting abnormality in the breast tissue before it develops into cancer." According to Mrs. Gordon, there is no denying that breast cancer poses a major public health challenge and a threat to national economic and social development for Jamaica. She pointed out that for every 21 women in Jamaica, one will develop breast cancer in her lifetime and the disease continues to be the leading cause of cancer related deaths among Jamaican women over the age of 25. "The high cost to treat the disease has led many Jamaican families into bankruptcy and the indirect cost of reduced productivity associated with one's inability to work and the loss of economic productivity due to premature death, has been significant," Mrs. Gordon noted. With this in mind, the JCS has stepped up its public education campaign along with islandwide mammography screening for October. "The Jamaica Cancer Society is waging war on breast cancer in this month of October...This disease can be treated effectively if detected early," she emphasized. October is internationally observed as Breast Cancer Awareness Month. The JCS is engaging in several activities to increase awareness about the disease, under the theme: "Join the Fight...Early Detection Saves Lives!" Breast cancer accounts for 29.4 per cent of all cancers in Jamaica, with an incidence rate of 43.1 per 100,000 in women and 0.6 in Jamaican men. Women 45 years old and younger account for one eighth of all cases of the disease.