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Australian Breast Cancer Information, Support and Advocacy

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About the NBCC

The National Breast Cancer Centre opened in June 1995 and is funded by the Australian Government's National Health and Medical Research Council. The centre was opened in response to community concerns about the human costs of breast cancer, and aims to improve breast cancer control by: analysing research; developing and disseminating clinical guidelines; providing accurate and accessible information to women and medical professionals; and developing a national monitoring system. The guiding philosophy of the NBCC is to be consumer-driven, evidence-based, and outcomes-oriented.

Content

The NBCC website is aimed at both patients and health professionals, but has a strong emphasis on the psychosocial and quality of life (rather than medical/technical) aspects of breast cancer. The site features a glossary, index and WebGlimpse search facility. The content is divided into several sections, outlined below.

There is a comprehensive **About** section, which explains the structure, guiding principles and mission of the NBCC. The 'What's New' area is updated weekly and has information on both general and NBCC-specific development, publications and events. The **Information** section is mostly aimed at healthcare professionals, as the content is generally too technical for a lay audience. It includes data on risk factors, detection, treatment, incidence and demographics, and links to breast cancer resources both within the NBCC and externally (eg Cochrane Collaboration). Also within this section are links to numerous publications including patient support leaflets, reports, scientific papers, audiovisual presentations and the NBCC's academic newsletter *Breast News*. Many of these documents are available online, but copies can also be ordered from the site. The **Support** area has contact details (and web links) for various breast cancer support groups, mailing lists and discussion forums. There is also a extensive list of websites concerned with the psychosocial aspects of the disease, such as sexual issues, reconstructive surgery and explaining to children. The **Consumer Issues** section contains a variety of articles by or for women with breast cancer, advocacy help and personal stories and poems. Finally there is an **Events** section that lists upcoming breast cancer meetings and conferences (national/international) and continuing medical education events.

Other comments

The site is updated regularly; at the time of review new material had been added in the previous week. The site has a simple structure, and the expandable section headings on the menu bar make navigation very simple.

Evaluation

This deceptively simple-looking site contains a wealth of information on various issues relating to breast cancer. The NBCC's focus on psychosocial aspects of the disease is primarily of importance to patients and their families, but healthcare professionals should certainly have at least a basic understanding of these sensitive issues. Given the increasing popularity among healthcare providers of economic and outcomes evaluations, no clinician or scientist can ignore quality of life, consumer-oriented issues.

References

1. National Breast Cancer Centre (NBCC). [<http://www.nbcc.org.au/>]