

Men develop breast cancer, too

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But little research is done on male treatments, expert says.

(HealthDay)—While rare, breast cancer does occur in men and is often diagnosed at a later age and stage than in women, experts say.

Each year in the United States, about 2,000 cases of male breast cancer are diagnosed and about 500 men die from the disease. It can strike at any age, but is most often diagnosed among men at ages 60 to 70, which is five to 10 years later than in women.

Breast cancer in men is typically diagnosed at a later age and stage than in women because men don't believe they're at risk for the disease, said Dr. Tatiana Prowell, a medical oncologist and breast cancer scientific lead at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's office of hematology and oncology products.

"You'd think that because men have smaller breasts they would notice a lump instantly. But men don't expect a [breast lump](#) to be cancer, whereas most women who feel a breast lump immediately assume the worst," she said in an FDA news release.

Because breast cancer in men accounts for only 1 percent of all breast cancer cases, there is little research into treatments for men with the disease.

"We tend to treat men the same way we treat [women](#)," Prowell said.

"Men have historically been excluded from breast cancer trials," she added. "We are actively encouraging drug companies to include men in all breast cancer trials unless there is a valid scientific reason not to. The number of men in breast cancer trials will still be small because [male breast cancer](#) is a rare condition, but any information to help men facing this disease is better than none."

Most [men](#) with [breast cancer](#) have painless lumps that can be detected by touch, but the disease usually isn't diagnosed until they develop soreness, she said.

More information: The U.S. National Library of Medicine has more about [male breast cancer](#).

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