

Older women may not be offered breast reconstruction after mastectomy

8 February 2017

A national study from England indicates that older women are often not offered immediate breast reconstruction following a mastectomy, even though guidelines state that surgeons should discuss reconstruction with all suitable patients and that it should be available at the initial surgical operation.

The findings suggest a need for clinicians to audit their own—and their organization's—decision-making processes around offering immediate breast reconstruction, and to deal with any [age bias](#) that may be present.

"Immediate breast reconstruction aims to improve the quality of life of women with breast cancer who have a mastectomy. It should be offered to women unless the cancer has spread too far or a woman is too unwell to have this major surgery," said Ranjeet Jeevan, lead author of the *British Journal of Surgery* study. "Our study found that while breast cancer clinicians considered these factors in younger women, immediate reconstruction was offered less often to [older women](#) with suitable tumours and who were fit enough for surgery. Clinicians should consider adopting a standardised assessment tool to identify all women suitable for [reconstructive surgery](#)."

More information: R. Jeevan et al, Association between age and access to immediate breast reconstruction in women undergoing mastectomy for breast cancer, *British Journal of Surgery* (2017). [DOI: 10.1002/bjs.10453](https://doi.org/10.1002/bjs.10453)

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