

BREAST SURGERY SERVICES

Surgical treatment of breast cancer aims to eradicate the primary tumour and any local extension in the hope of achieving total disease control.

Breast surgery is performed in all hospitals across SWSAHS by breast surgeons and general surgeons, who are mainly visiting medical officers. A number of surgeons in SWSAHS have an interest in breast surgery and contribute to breast disease special interest groups.

Day-only stays represent 44% of breast surgery. Plastic surgeons across SWSAHS perform breast reconstruction surgery, and Radiation Oncology and Medical Oncology Services are delivered in Cancer Therapy Centres at the Liverpool, Campbelltown and Bankstown (medical oncology only) Hospitals.

SWSAHS is approximately 78% self-sufficient in public sector breast surgery. In 2002/03, there were 512 breast surgery separations in SWSAHS hospitals, accounting for 1,306 beddays. Most public sector outflows were to the Concord, Westmead, Royal Prince Alfred and St. George Hospitals. Of total SWSAHS resident demand, 33% is met by private sector hospitals.

It is estimated that there were 300-350 new breast cases last year in SWSAHS. For every breast cancer case there are 50 other benign cases. SWSAHS currently has over 1,000 breast cancer cases.

In 2006, at a planned 85% occupancy and assuming no changes in flows adult patients will need approximately 4 beds in SWSAHS hospitals. The demand for breast surgery is projected to increase by 2.3% to 2006 and by a further 1.7% to 2011.

Current Services Provision

Primary Care Services

General Practitioners diagnose the great majority of breast cancers in the Area. The role of the GP is central in community education and the early identification and management of breast cancer. Continuing professional education of primary care workers is important in achieving best practice and detection and management of breast cancer.

BreastScreen Greater Western Sydney Assessment Services

The National Breast Screening Program is funded through a cost sharing arrangement between the Commonwealth and States. BreastScreen NSW is part of BreastScreen Australia. Service delivery is managed through performance agreements with the Area Health Services.

In SWSAHS fixed breast screening units are located at Bankstown, Campbelltown, Bowral and Liverpool and mobile services are provided in other SWS areas.

The BreastScreen Greater Western Sydney Assessment Services that are available for women in SWSHS who have been identified through the screening program include:

- A minimum one half-day clinic co-located with the screening unit in the shopping centre at Liverpool.
- An assessment service located in the old Parramatta Hospital Grounds providing a minimum 2 half days per week.

Cancer Therapy Centre Assessment Clinic Liverpool

This service provides a variety of specialised management and assessment services for breast cancer, including a multi disciplinary breast cancer clinic for women with proven or probable breast cancer, Radiologists surgeons, radiation oncologists and medical oncologists with a special interest in breast surgery provide the service.

Asymptomatic women are not catered for at these clinics, as there is not the full range of diagnostic equipment.

Specialist Services

A number of specialist services in the private and public sectors currently provide services to women with breast cancer, including radiologists, pathologists and surgeons.

Bankstown Hospital

There is a senior staff specialist with a major interest in breast cancer screening, diagnosis and therapy. In 2002/03, there were 121 separations; average LOS was 1.8 days (2.2 days excluding day only). At 95% occupancy this is equivalent to 0.5 beds.

Fairfield Hospital

In 2002/03, there were 66 separations; average LOS was 12.4 days (4.3 days excluding day only). At 95% occupancy this is equivalent to 0.5 beds.

Liverpool Hospital

Liverpool has one dedicated position for breast surgery. In 2002/03, there were 177 separations; average LOS was 3.2 days and 4.9 days excluding day only cases. At 95% occupancy this is equivalent to 2 beds.

Campbelltown Hospital

In 2002/03, there were 82 separations; average LOS was 3.6 days (3.8 days excluding day only). At 95% occupancy this is equivalent to 1.0 bed.

Camden Hospital

In 2002/03, there were 58 separations and all were Day only cases.

Bowral Hospital

In 2002/03, there were 8 day only separations.

Research and Teaching

Involvement in clinical trials and research throughout all phases of the service delivery is an essential component of improving and maximising processes and outcomes. The timely collection and collation of data is critical to improving services and outcomes. Continuing professional education of primary care workers is important in achieving best practice and detection and management of breast cancer.

Major Equipment

The concentration of services into a networked service will further raise standards of care, facilitate adequate data collection, enhance clinical research and collaboration between clinicians and ultimately lead to an improvement in health outcomes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Breast Surgery be developed as an Area-wide service.
- Develop a purpose-built and designed Area Breast Assessment and Referral Centre at Liverpool.
- Facilitate the credentialling of surgeons performing breast surgery consistent with the College of Surgeons, Breast Section guidelines and NHMRC clinical practice guidelines.
- Bankstown, Fairfield, and Campbelltown hospitals be the sites for the provision of breast surgery for cancer.
- Reconstructive breast surgery be concentrated at Bankstown and Liverpool in alliance with the plastic surgeons.