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The Peripandemic Impact of Cervical and Breast Cancer on Women's Years of Life Lost in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina

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Background

This study aims to assess the impact of malignant neoplasms on women in terms of years of life lost (YLL) in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FB&H) during pre-pandemic, pandemic and post-pandemic periods. The analysis focuses on C53 (cervix uteri) and C50 (breast cancer).

Methods

A retrospective data analysis with causes of death data from the Institute for Statistics of FB&H was conducted to evaluate YLL by multiplying age specific deaths with the remaining life expectancy at the same age using the GBD 2019 life expectancy table. Age-standardized YLL rates were calculated based on the world standard population. Time trends between 2019 and 2022 were analyzed to understand the potential impact of the pandemic on the burden of malignant neoplasms in women in terms of YLL.

Results

In 2019, the YLL for women due to cervical cancer was 2,050, increasing to 2,069, 2,293 in the pandemic years of 2020, 2021 and again decreasing to 1,797 in 2022. The age-standardized YLL rate for 2019 was 118, whereas for 2020, 2021, and 2022, it retrospectively changed to 113, 125, and 102. YLL attributed to breast cancer in 2019 was 8,213, rising to 9,746 in 2020 and decreasing to 8,687 and 7,797 in 2021 and 2022, respectively. The age-standardized YLL rate for 2019 was 395, while for 2020, 2021, and 2022, it shifted to 478, 423, and 371 respectively.

Conclusion

There was a noticeable increase in YLL associated with these malignant neoplasms among women especially in 2020. One explanation could be that hesitancy to seek health care was most pronounced at the beginning of the pandemic leading to delayed care, accelerated deterioration of health and higher mortality. Also, cancer patients who died of COVID-19 due to their pre-conditions without being tested may erroneously have been registered as having died of cancer leading to an increased registered cancer mortality. These findings highlight the pandemic's impact on mortality in patients with malignant neoplasms and emphasize the need for targeted interventions and healthcare strategies.

Key messages 1

This study underscores a potential interplay between COVID-19 mortality among female population and underlying malignant neoplasms, urging the implementation of comprehensive healthcare strategies.

Key messages 2

The interruption of essential healthcare during the pandemic COVID-19, particularly among women delaying their health check-ups, contributed to these increasing trends YLL in 2020.