



23 February 2020 – Breast cancer is the most common type of cancer among women worldwide, impacting 2.1 million women each year, causing the greatest number of cancer-related deaths among women. In 2018, WHO estimated that 627 000 women died from breast cancer – approximately 15% of all cancer deaths among women. While breast cancer rates are higher among women in more developed regions, rates are increasing in nearly every region globally.

In Yemen, a country in conflict and economic freefall, breast cancer accounts for a quarter of diagnosed female cancers. The main problem in Yemen is related to late detection. Early diagnosis is critical in improving outcomes and survival of breast cancer, especially in a low-resourced health system like Yemen's, made more fragile by this current context.

Mammography machines support the early detection of breast cancer, and these machines are available in only two hospitals – Al Jumhuri and Al Kuwait hospitals located in Sana'a. The one in Al Kuwait hospital is out of service, while the one at Al Jumhuri oncology center is extremely overloaded and cannot meet the needs alone.

“The support provided by WHO provides a chance at a better life for thousands of women in Yemen. Providing Al Jumhuri hospital with the mammography machine provides increased opportunities to detect breast cancer early on,” said Dawlah, the manager of the CR Mammography centre in Al-Jumhuri Hospital Sana'a.

WHO and the World Bank through the Emergency Health and Nutrition Project (EHNP) provided Al-Jumhuri hospital with a computed radiography mammography machine aiming to increase access to breast cancer detection at an early stage, allowing for more effective treatment, hence reducing the risk of death from breast cancer.

Through the EHNP, WHO, UNICEF and World Bank have kept Yemen's health facilities

running. An estimated 16.4 million people in Yemen are in urgent need of health care, and health facilities in Yemen, at times, lack the basic necessities to keep them running, like fuel, water and commodities that have become scarce. Health facilities relying on fuel-powered generators to ensure that life-saving medical equipment works. The EHNP is protecting Yemen's health system. As the project continues to expand, humanitarian access still remains one of the biggest challenges to implementation. However, since the project launched, much has been done, paving the way for increased access to health care for all Yemenis.

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