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Abstract

Early disease detection is important to increase positive outcomes for patients with breast cancer. In Ontario, routine breast cancer screening through mammography is offered to women over the age of 50 (CCO, n.d. b). The program offers two streams of surveillance: routine screening for those at average risk of breast cancer and enhanced screening for those at high-risk (CCO, n.d.c). Despite providing screening without needing physician referral, recent program analysis demonstrated that only 65% of the eligible population participates in screening (Lofters et al., 2018). This disparity in screening suggests that the Ontario Breast Screening Program (OBSP) falls short of meeting population needs. The current policy was evaluated using the Policy Triangle Framework. The results highlight the existing inequities in access and screening quality. To address these issues, the OBSP policy can be enhanced by increasing access to screening and improving public and healthcare provider knowledge. Utilizing mobile clinics, media campaigns, creating clear guidelines for vulnerable populations, and standardizing digital mammography across screening sites are examples of how the provincial policy can be enhanced. Although cost, risk, and obstacles accompany policy change, improving BCS in Ontario will address inequities in accessibility and ensure all eligible Ontario residents receive high-quality BCS.

Key Words: breast cancer screening, Ontario Cancer Plan, policy, Cancer Care Ontario, Ontario Breast Screening Program.

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