

Joint Event on

# Breast Cancer & Cancer Therapy

August 05-06, 2021 | Webinar

## Kosovo, as a young developing country, in Europe is facing breast Cancer

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Kosovo

Kosovo, as a young developing country, in Europe is facing breast Cancer, like other developed countries, but Kosovo is facing breast cancer without health insurance, without new drugs in the essential list which prolongs life in metastatic cases, without breast cancer register, with the loss of workplace during treatment, especially in the private sector.

Breast cancer is the most frequent cancer among women, impacting 2.1 million women each year, and also causes the greatest number of cancer-related deaths among women. In 2018, it is estimated that 627,000 women died from breast cancer – that is 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. Early diagnosis strategies focus on providing timely access to cancer treatment by reducing barriers to care and/or improving access to effective diagnosis services. The goal is to increase the proportion of breast cancers identified at an early stage, allowing for more effective treatment to be used and reducing the risks of death from breast cancer. Screening consists of testing women to identify cancers before any symptoms appear. Various methods have been evaluated as breast cancer screening tools, including mammography, clinical breast exam and breast self-exam

Some data on Kosovo Breast cancer Compare with other EU or neighbors countries, show Kosovo has a lower number of patients diagnosed with breast cancer at earlier stages of disease and this number increase in later stages, meaning there is a lack of awareness about BC among public and too much stigma among population.

Number of new breast cancer cases in Kosovo

Year No of new BC cases

2016	293
2017	329
2018	340
2019	380
2020	330

• For 2019, BC age incidence, New cases of BC

18-44 years	26%	10.3%
45-54 years	23%	26%
55-64 years	29%	64.2%
>65 years	23%	

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## Treatment

Public 49% and Private 51%

The lowest number of breast cancer cases in Kosovo in 2020 is not a consequence of the fact that this number has decreased compared to previous years but this is due to the Covid 19 Virus as many women have not been able to go to doctor with time and this has increased that breast cancer has been diagnosed in more advanced stages.

In Kosovo, there is lack of medical national data and benchmarks (as new founded country). So, there is a low awareness about unmet needs of BC patients among public, healthcare institutions, related organizations and partners. Consequently, there is one inadequate funding (underfunding) and low focus/attention for BC care from Healthcare system (in general).

## Background of Association:

RENESANSA—the Association of Women in the Fight Against Breast Cancer was founded in Prizren, on February 4, 2017. It is a breast cancer patients Association covering all Kosovo territory, standing at the side of those who need us.

## RENESANSA association was created:

as a major need to be a support for women who are diagnosed with breast cancer and for their families members as a necessary support of the diagnosed women with breast cancer to have communication and exchanging experiences they have/had from the diagnose to receiving treatment, and follow up with each other, to encourage the fight against cancer to raise awareness regarding breast cancer and to support Kosovo women in their task to ask for better informing conditions about the breast cancer, to ask for the appropriate diagnosis and curing treatments to mobilize women and girls strength (with breast cancer), to involve them on important issues for the whole society, to secure human rights, freedom, justice, dignity, security, health and peace for all them.

## Mission and aims of RENESANSA:

- Women's awareness of early detection of breast cancer
- Strengthen the diagnosed breast cancer patients who are more likely to cope with treatment therapies
- Raising awareness among family members of breast cancer patients for the maximum support of breast cancer patients
- Psychological support for breast cancer patients for the purpose of integration into society after breast cancer treatment
- Improving the quality of life of patients with breast cancer
- Selection and education on healthy lifestyles for people suffering/recovering from breast cancer
- Promotion of any kind of assistance and the rights for breast cancer patients

## RENESANSA ambitions:

- Education of population related to health protection and improvement of access to breast cancer
- Improving legal rights of patients with breast cancer

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- Improving the trading and quality of life of patient with breast cancer
- Implementation of International Standards and Practices on Breast Cancer diagnose and management
- Cooperation with Health Institution and other interested organizations in achieving common goals in Breast cancer advances
- Achieve and maintenance of sustainability of association
- Collaboration with other similar foreign organizations and associations 90% of members are breast cancer patient/survivors

### **RENESANSA Association commitment:**

Kosovo, as a young developing country in Europe, is facing breast cancer, like other developed countries, but it is a matter of fact that Kosovo is facing breast cancer without health insurance, without new drugs in the essential list which prolongs life in metastatic cases, without breast cancer register, with the loss of workplace during treatment, especially in the private sector. There are so many issues and challenges that women with breast cancer and their are facing fighting with their disease.

In spite of this situation, there are demanding emergency needs for beating Breast Cancer in Kosovo as below:

1. National cancer plan
2. Screening programs
3. Timely and right treatments according to International Guidelines (ESMO, ASCO, ABC, etc.)
4. Breast Cancer specialized Clinic according to EU standards
5. Genetic counseling and testing
6. Accreditation
7. Care for metastatic breast cancer

We need to take giant steps and actions as soon as possible to start with:

- Prevention of BC
- Early detection of BC
- Adequate treatment, the right person, the right treatment, at the right time
- Quality of life of patients and survivor
- Life after Breast Cancer
- Education of BC patients/population

We need to follow Europe's vision, Beating Cancer Plan, a plan that brings hope and we can win together, we can change a lives and stories of so many families or citizens

Association events and activities:

1. On February 4, 2017, in honor of World Cancer Day, an awareness lecture was held with women and girls.
2. On September 22, 2017 a painting of all the girls affected by breast cancer was held with the aim of raising awareness and raising awareness of the issue.

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3. In October 2017, a lecture was held to raise awareness and awareness of women and girls that early discovery saves lives and facilitates cure.
4. Also in October 2017, lectures were held at lower secondary schools to increase awareness of the prevention and early detection of breast cancer.
5. In October 2018 a round table was held to advocate the opening of a Prizren chemotherapy outpatient ward
6. On March 2019, a workshop was held on: The needs and needs of patients with breast cancer and the Oncologist model and patient and vice versa
7. In August 2019, the RENESANSA association received a donation from a German Brustkrebs Deutschland association (150 wigs, 150 brasses, 40 breast-implant prostheses, scarves and hats) which began distributing to women and girls throughout Kosovo
8. On September 29, 2019, RENESANSA organizes the Race for the Cure Kosovo 2019 running and walking event in order to raise the issue of breast cancer awareness, to show how important sport is for people with breast cancer, others to solidarize with affected persons including the breast cancer. In this activity children have participated so that children from an early age are educated about the importance of sport.
9. From January to March 2020 on three activities
10. Activity: Motivation and support women who are fighting breast cancer
11. Activity : 4 February – World Cancer day
12. Activity: Establish network with women affected by breast cancer in other centers of Kosova
13. Organizing Race for the Cure Kosovo 2020, Second Edition in Prizren, in the Peaj, Gjakova, Ferizaji and Pristina first time. The corona crisis has inspired us to join forces and take Race for the Cure® to a next level. We invite everyone in Kosovo to participate in the digital Race for the Cure® and throw a lifeline to help breast cancer organisations by raising funds and awareness all over Europe. We do this by reaching out to the hard-to-reach people and places, by connecting patients and health care takers, by involving partners and stakeholders to support breast cancer patients and organisations today and in the years to come.
14. During covid time, Renesansa tried to help Breast cancer patients in various ways, starting from the supply of external breast prostheses, brushes, wigs or hats and scarves with psychological sessions with physiotherapeutic exercises, provide psycho-social and physical rehabilitation.

This research aimed to identify (new) cases diagnosed with breast cancer in 2020 in Kosovo, to compare these numbers with those of previous years to see if there are was an increasing or decreasing trend, and identify which are the main challenges that people diagnosed with breast cancer in Kosovo face as well as identifying difficulties that Oncologists and Oncology Clinic in Prishtina face in general.

The research also now presents statistics on the prevalence of breast cancer in the world and region and also contains recommendations from Specialist Oncologists, women who have survived the disease and those which are currently being treated in Kosovo and abroad.

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The research includes in-depth interviews conducted with Oncology Specialists of the Oncology Clinic at the University Clinic Center of Kosovo and also interviews with breast cancer survivors in Kosovo.

The data based on the research were provided by the Administration of the University Hospital and Clinical Service of Kosovo, as well as the research, contained data collected in the field by our research group.

## Biography:

She is an Associate of Women in Support of the Fight against Breast Cancer is supporting breast cancer survivors to receive better treatment; Family Support for Breast Cancer Patients; Psychosocial rehabilitation after medical treatment; Assistance with materials needed after treatments such as wigs, dentures etc.

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