BreastScreen Australia 2009-2010 data quality statement

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Identifying and definitional attributes

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Data quality

Data quality statement summary:

Summary of Key Issues

- All states and territories maintain a population-based BreastScreen register which records the data collected during a woman's contact with a BreastScreen service.
- The AIHW compiles BreastScreen Australia data supplied from state and territory BreastScreen registers in order to monitor BreastScreen Australia annually at a national level.
- State and territory BreastScreen registers change every day, adding new records and improving the quality of existing records as new information becomes available. BreastScreen Australia data may therefore change from year to year.
- For 2009–2010 data, New South Wales data are not available for participation by main language spoken at home, rescreening, recall to assessment, invasive breast cancer and DCIS detection and sensitivity due to the implementation of a new Business Information System in NSW. It is anticipated that future reports will include data for these years.

Description

BreastScreen Australia is Australia's national, population-based breast cancer screening program and is a joint program of the Australian and state and territory governments.

BreastScreen registers in each state and territory record data collected during a woman's contact with a BreastScreen service.

Each BreastScreen program supplies BreastScreen data annually to the AIHW. These data are compiled into the BreastScreen Australia database, held at the AIHW to enable national monitoring of BreastScreen Australia.

Some BreastScreen data are supplied as aggregate data, which are not included in the BreastScreen Australia database.

Institutional environment:

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) is a major national agency set up by the Australian Government under the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Act 1987 to provide reliable, regular and relevant information and statistics on Australia's health and welfare. It is an independent statutory authority established in 1987, governed by a management Board, and accountable to the Australian Parliament through the Health and Ageing portfolio.

The AIHW aims to improve the health and wellbeing of Australians through better health and welfare information and statistics. It collects and reports information on a wide range of topics and issues, ranging from health and welfare expenditure, hospitals, disease and injury, and mental health, to ageing, homelessness, disability and child protection.

The Institute also plays a role in developing and maintaining national metadata standards. This work contributes to improving the quality and consistency of national health and welfare statistics. The Institute works closely with governments and non-government organisations to achieve greater adherence to these standards in administrative data collections to promote national consistency and comparability of data and reporting.

One of the main functions of the AIHW is to work with the states and territories to improve the quality of administrative data and, where possible, to compile national datasets based on data from each jurisdiction, to analyse these datasets and disseminate information and statistics.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Act 1987, in conjunction with compliance to the Privacy Act 1988 (Cwth), ensures that the data collections managed by the AIHW are kept securely and under the strictest conditions with respect to privacy and confidentiality.

For further information see the AIHW website www.aihw.gov.au.

The AIHW has been receiving BreastScreen data since 1996.

Timeliness:

BreastScreen data are available within about 6–12 months (it can take up to 12 months for final pathology results on all breast tissue samples to be received by BreastScreen registers). The BreastScreen Australia database cannot be fully compiled until the final jurisdiction supplies its data.

Participation data for the previous calendar year are supplied in July each year; rescreening and invasive breast cancer and DCIS detection data for the previous calendar year are supplied July–December each year (rescreening and sensitivity data lag behind, as the specifications for these require a specified period of time to pass before they can be accurately calculated).

The current BreastScreen Australia database contains data on women who participated in BreastScreen Australia between 1996 and 2010.

Accessibility:

BreastScreen Australia data are published annually in the *BreastScreen Australia monitoring report* available on the AIHW website http://www.aihw.gov.au/breast-cancer-screening/ where they can be downloaded without charge. Supplementary data tables that provide more detailed data are also provided to accompany each report, and these, too, are available on the AIHW website where they can be downloaded without charge.

General enquiries about AIHW publications can be made to the Communications, Media and Marketing Unit on (02) 6244 1032 or via email to info@aihw.gov.au.

Interpretability:

While many concepts in the *BreastScreen Australia monitoring report* are easy to interpret, other concepts and statistical calculations are more complex. All concepts are explained within the body of the report presenting these data, along with footnotes to provide further details and caveats. Appendix C provides additional detail on the data sources and classifications, and Appendix E provides details on the statistical methods used.

Relevance: Breast cancer screening data are highly relevant for monitoring trends in breast screening participation and the detection of invasive breast cancer and DCIS, as well as other measures of program performance such as recall rates and sensitivity measures. The data are used for many purposes by policy-makers and researchers, but are supplied and analysed specifically to monitor and inform BreastScreen Australia.

Accuracy: All data provided by state and territory BreastScreen programs, once analysed, are supplied back for verification.

Women attending a BreastScreen service are able to self-report Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status; this database field is therefore considered to be of high quality. However, use of the ‘not stated’ category has decreased substantially over time, which provides much more accurate data on current participation in BreastScreen Australia by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, but makes trend data difficult to interpret.

State and territory BreastScreen databases change every day, and not just because new records are added; existing records are changed if new, more precise information becomes available or if typographical errors are discovered by routine data checking procedures. As a result, the number of women participating, as well as DCIS and invasive breast cancer cases reported by the AIHW for any particular year may change slightly over time, and data published by a jurisdictional BreastScreen program at a certain point in time may differ slightly from what is published by the AIHW at a different time.

Coherence: BreastScreen data are reported and published annually by the AIHW.

For 2009–2010 data, New South Wales data are not available for participation by main language spoken at home, rescreening, recall to assessment, invasive breast cancer and DCIS detection and sensitivity due to issues relating to the implementation of a new business information system in that state. It is anticipated that future reports will include data for these years.

Source and reference attributes

Submitting organisation: AIHW