

New free breast cancer website helps sufferers to predict their survival chances

By [Daily Mail Reporter](#)

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A new website was launched today to help breast cancer patients predict their chances of survival.

The website, www.predict.nhs.uk, is designed to offer greater accuracy through inputting data such as age, whether the tumour was detected by screening or the patient finding a lump, width of tumour and the grade of cancer.

Patients and doctors are then given a prediction of how likely the person is to survive for the next five or 10 years, and any extra benefits from drug treatment.

predict

PREDICT Tool: Breast Cancer Survival

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Patient name
Age at diagnosis
Mode of detection Screen-detected Symptomatic Unknown
Tumour size mm
Tumour grade 1 2 3
Number of positive nodes
ER status Positive Negative
Gen chemo regimen Second Third

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Overall survival at five and ten years (percent)

'Accurate': Experts used data from the Eastern Cancer Registration and Information Centre, for East Anglia, on more than 5,600 patients for the website

The tool, called Predict, is free and was developed by a team led by Professor Gordon Wishart, director of the Cambridge breast unit at Cambridge University Hospitals.

Experts used data from the Eastern Cancer Registration and Information Centre, for East Anglia, on more than 5,600 patients for the website, which is supported by an unrestricted educational grant from the pharmaceutical firm Pfizer.

This was then cross-referenced with data from the West Midlands to ensure an accurate picture could be built up of cancer survival across the UK.



Meg McArthur, senior policy officer at Breakthrough Breast Cancer: 'This website could... potentially lead to improved treatment choices'

The East of England data included a mix of hospitals, including general hospitals and teaching trusts.

The plan is to continually update the website as more data becomes available. It is based on a study published in the journal *Breast Cancer Research* in January.

Professor Wishart said: 'This new model uses large numbers of UK women diagnosed and treated in the NHS in recent times where we had up-to-date, accurate patient records as well as survival data.'

'It is important for patients to work with their specialist to choose the right drug treatment following breast cancer surgery.'

'This choice depends heavily on accurate prediction of prognosis.'

BREAST CANCER STATS



- Breast cancer is now the most common cancer in the UK
- In the UK in 2007 almost 45,700 women were diagnosed with breast cancer; around 125 women a day
- 277 men in the UK were diagnosed with breast cancer in 2007
- Female breast cancer incidence rates have increased by around 50 per cent over the last twenty-five years
- In the last ten years, female breast cancer incidence rates in the UK have increased by 5 per cent
- 8 in 10 breast cancers are diagnosed in women aged 50 and over
- In the UK in 2007/2008 the NHS breast screening programmes detected more than 16,000 cases of breast cancer
- It's estimated that the NHS breast screening programme saves over 1,000 lives each year
- Worldwide, around 1.38 million women were diagnosed with breast cancer in 2008
- Breast cancer incidence rates vary considerably, with the highest rates in Western Europe and the lowest rates in

Africa and Asia

- In the European Union (EU-27) around 332,000 new cases of breast cancer were diagnosed in 2008

Source: BreastCancerUK

'Clinicians can use this model to involve patients as core participants in informed decisions about which treatment to use and how aggressive to be.'

Meg McArthur, senior policy officer at Breakthrough Breast Cancer, said the tool was useful but patients should discuss the findings with their doctor.

'We want people with breast cancer to be able to make informed decisions about their treatment,' she said.

'This website, which could help the partnership between patients and healthcare professionals and potentially lead to improved treatment choices.

'We would encourage that Predict is only used and discussed in consultation with a doctor to ensure that the patient's assessment is accurate.'

It comes as separate research published in the British Journal of Cancer showed that studying calcium deposits in breast tissue can help doctors more accurately diagnose tumours.

Some patterns of calcium deposits in the breast can show that cancer is growing, although patients currently need further tests to be sure.

In the latest research, experts used infrared light to measure the chemical make-up of 236 deposits from 110 patients.

They found that patients whose tumours were benign had deposits with a higher carbonate content than those who had malignant cancer tumours.

They also found a direct link between the chemical make-up of the calcium deposits and the seriousness of the breast cancer.

The finding could mean patients avoid having a biopsy in future in favour of a test which looks at the make-up of calcium deposits.

In malignant cases, the test could also give an early indication of how advanced the cancer is.

Professor Nicholas Stone, an author on the study from Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, said: 'Testing calcifications with light would be a non-invasive method that could help doctors determine whether a woman has any aggressive tumours in her breasts alongside having a mammogram.

'This could help many thousands of women avoid the anxiety of having a biopsy and then waiting for the result.'

Sara Hiom, director of health information at Cancer Research UK, said: 'The NHS screening programme is important in detecting breast cancer and saving lives.

'These results suggest that developing a test for calcifications could further improve screening by providing a more detailed diagnosis about the tumour and potentially avoiding the need for biopsies in some cases.'

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'A little knowledge is a dangerous thing'. Something I heard a nurse remark to other nurses years ago.

I think it is certainly true of this website. Incidentally, my sister had a mastectomy last year due to cancer and I will NOT be showing her this article.

- Eileen, Herts England, 15/9/2010 15:21

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I have had the misfortune to have suffered breast cancer twice - first eleven years ago at the age of 34 and then again 3 years ago aged 42. Besides my mother's sister dying of the disease, I have no genetic link (have had to test to confirm that). I do not want some computer telling me that I should give up and roll over now! I had chemo twice, radio once and herceptin the second time and I feel fine; and I had every intention of seeing my children through uni, get married and have children of their own. I have friends who are having ongoing treatment because their cancer has spread, but they hold down jobs and don't let it get in the way of their lives. I urge anyone out there going through this to be positive. It is a disease that can be beaten, so ignore what the computer says, but fight for what you consider is the right treatment for you - good luck.

- Celia Bridgman, Epsom, 15/9/2010 14:14

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This is sick: My wife has had Breast Cancer and is equally appalled by this site ! Surely those who have slim chances should be allowed to at least have a positive view of their prognosis.

- chris richards, Frinton on sea, 15/9/2010 13:50

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totally unethical - trying to predict how good your chances are is akin to killing all hope if the thing gives you a dire reading. as someone who has battled a chronic illness all my life, the worst thing more than the illness itself is doctors trying to guess what might happen based on statistics. quite simply you can't. while it may or may not be useful to the doctors, for many a patient this type of information will cause much hopelessness and angst. sometimes not knowing and taking things as they come is a much better way of dealing with serious illness. there is much evidence to suggest that how people cope can make a difference to their quality of life. more information does not always equal better choices or indeed a better life.

- Dr James, London UK, 15/9/2010 13:23

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Not a good idea in my opinion.
Is this where the NHS is going?
I know I would worry myself silly and make myself and family upset by doing this on line test.
I'm also wondering what's the point? Going by reports in the media, the NHS can't afford the drugs anyway.
What a shambles.

- Dolly, Northwest, 15/9/2010 12:10

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Surely it is a doctor's job to do this? I wouldn't trust anyone to assess their own cancer as we tend to over exaggerate or under exaggerate what our symptoms are out of fear or denial. Use a doctor not the net, no matter how well meaning. Think how you'd feel if you click clicked and then read very bad news that a doctor might break to you more kindly.

- Christine, Co. Antrim, 15/9/2010 11:16

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