

RISK FACTORS FOR FEMALE BREAST AND
CERVICAL CANCERS IN SRI LANKA

B.N.N. Weerasooriya* and W.A.J. Weerasooriya**

*Dept. of Statistics & Computer Science, University of Colombo

**Postgraduate Institute of Medicine, University of Colombo.

The National Cancer Control Programme of the Ministry of Health, Sri Lanka conducted a case control study to evaluate the potential risks of a number of factors for the occurrence of breast and cervical cancers which account for about 45% of all female cancers. The study consists of 101 breast cancer cases and 149 cervical cancer cases diagnosed in 1979 at the Maharagama Cancer Institute. The control sample consists of 270 cancer free females selected from the Colombo General Hospital. The following factors are evaluated to see whether and how they influence the occurrence of breast and cervical cancers.

Factors considered for breast cancer are:

1. age at marriage
2. age at menarche
3. breast feeding history (expressed in terms of years breast fed up to the fourth child)

Factors considered for cervical cancer are:

1. age at menarche
2. age at menopause
3. age at first pregnancy
4. age at first birth
5. number of pregnancies

The measure of risk: relative risk: due to each specific factor was computed to evaluate the cause-effect relationship. In order to test the homogeneity of the estimates of relative risk at different levels of each factor, the method introduced by Woolf (1915) was used.

References:

Breslow, N.E. and Day, N.E. (1980) Statistical methods in cancer research. IARC Scientific Publications, No. 23.