

## A Brief History of Breast Cancer

From the Ancient times till 1970s, many surgeons and scientists had tried and discovered different types of treatments for breast cancer, including deep cutting, X-Ray radiation, and surgery combined with chemotherapy etc. Breast cancer survival rate has been gradually increasing.

Today, the survival rate of breast cancer has reached a historical peak. About 6 million patients has survived after the diagnosis with breast cancer for more than 5 years worldwide. The combination of individualized treatment, surgery, chemotherapy and radiation has contributed to the survival rate, especially when the breast cancer is discovered at early stage.

The earliest breast cancer in record was found in ancient Egypt medical literature, describing 48 surgical symptoms including “lumps in the breast.” The earliest known case of breast cancer death can be traced back to 4,200 years ago from an Egyptian coffin that was unearthed in 2015. A woman's skeleton was found in the coffin. Its deformed bone structure was due to metastatic breast cancer.

In 11<sup>th</sup> century Spain, a famous surgeon Abu al-Qasim al-Zahrawi found that when a breast tumor can be completely removed, especially when they are small and at the early-stage, breast cancer can be cured. He further mentioned that if the cancer has existed for a long time and the tumor is very large, there is no cure.

In 1590, a France surgeon Barthélémy Cabrol suggested late stage cancer can be cured with mastectomy and removing deep breast glands and tissues. His suggestion was followed and improved upon for a couple of decades. Results were not as good as expected.

In 1896, Emil Grubbe at Chicago Hahnemann Medical School used X-Ray radiation therapy to treat a patient with breast cancer. This is the first record in radiation oncology. Rose Lee died shortly after. She received several hours of X-Ray radiation treatment.

In 1956, Robert Egan developed mammography to detect the size of the breast tumor that cannot be felt or palpated.

Since the 1970s, mammography has become routine screening method for women. In 1975, surgery combined with chemotherapy has become the standard treatment in breast cancer. In 1977, estrogen blocking drug tamoxifen approved in the United States

for the treatment of advanced metastatic breast cancer. Today, tamoxifen is still the one of the blocking drugs in the usage of preventing and treating specialty breast cancer.

Mary - Claire King and his colleagues used a family history of breast cancer DNA samples to explore the relationships between mutations in tumor suppressing genes, breast cancer, and ovarian cancer. The gene mutations were named as BRCA1 and BRCA2. They can increase the risks of cancer. Today, certain women with BRCA, including famous actress Angelina Jolie, choose to mastectomy to reduce the risk of breast cancer.

In 1995, HRT is no longer recommend for treatment for postmenopausal women due to its high risk of increasing cancer for the postmenopausal women.

In 2000, Charles Perou and his colleagues reported, according to different DNA mutations, breast cancer can be divided into several clinical subtypes. The DNA analysis of tumor cells enables doctors to choose the most effective treatment method. In 2002, two big researches indicate, smaller tumor local resection combined with radiotherapy of breast cancer can make patients live as long as radical mastectomy treatment people.

With the advance in surgery techniques and oncology, early breast cancer detection certainly means survival now. For more information on early breast cancer detection with BSGI and its associated clinical reviews, please [click here](#).

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