

Experts lay stress on early diagnosis of breast cancer

Staff Reporter

OMAN TRIBUNE

MUSCAT The importance of radiological diagnosis in early detection and treatment of breast cancer was highlighted at the international conference on breast imaging held at the Institute of Health Sciences on Wednesday.

"We should introduce countrywide screening, and anyone aged 40 years should have a mammogram done. They should not wait until they have a lump and they are referred to some hospital after two or three months," said Yuthar Mohammed Al Rawahy, founder and president of the National Association for Cancer Awareness.

Organised by Oman Association of Radiographers (OAR) in collaboration with Al Afiyaa Imaging and Diagnostic Centre, the event updated participants on the latest in breast imaging and threw light on incidents of breast cancer in Oman and its screening.

"We would like the ministry to introduce mammography as a tool for everyone in all the health centres. It is alarming to find that in the Middle East



Yuthar Mohammed Al Rawahy and Subhash K. Ramani at an international conference on breast imaging at the Institute of Health Sciences, on Wednesday.

younger people are diagnosed with cancer, so we need to do more research on this," she said.

"The National Association for Cancer Awareness has had the mobile mammography unit built and commissioned to be used as a tool to create awareness about the disease and also to carry out screening.

"Being an NGO, we are just using this tool to create awareness and do the screenings. However, we can't use just one mobile mammography to do screening for the whole country; it's impossible

because we can do a maximum of 25 in a day. So, anytime anyone wants to work with us, we are always open to any cooperation with any organisation," said Rawahy.

The conference explained available treatment options in Oman, including surgery and radiotherapy.

Dr Subhash K. Ramani, Professor and Radiologist, Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai, said: "Today's conference is an educational activity to update individuals on how breast imaging is used to detect and diagnose breast can-

cer. Mammography is the standard of care worldwide as it is evidence-based medicine which has proved to be useful in detecting cancer at an early stage."

Rawahy added: "I think it is very important to have Ramani giving us a presentation, to show the radiographers that they have to be careful. They are not all dealing with digital equipment, which is easier and clearer to use. In some parts of Oman, they still don't have digital equipment and steps should be taken to equip all places uniformly."