



BREAST CANCER CARE SERVICES IN MALTA

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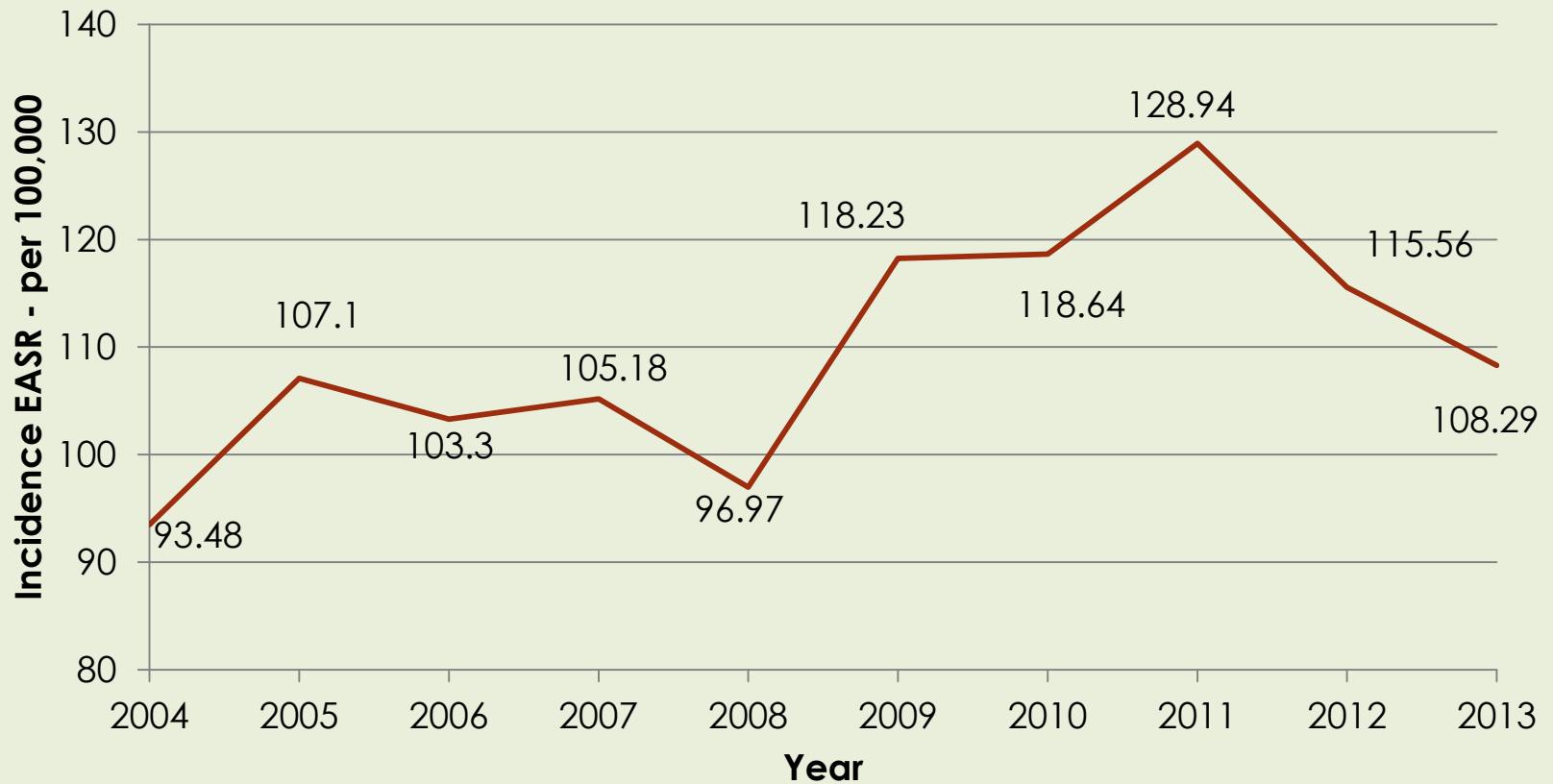
Malta

- **Population:** approx. 438,000
- **Size:** 316km²
- **Physicians:** 3.5 per 1000 population
- **Nurses and midwives:** 7.5 per 1000 population



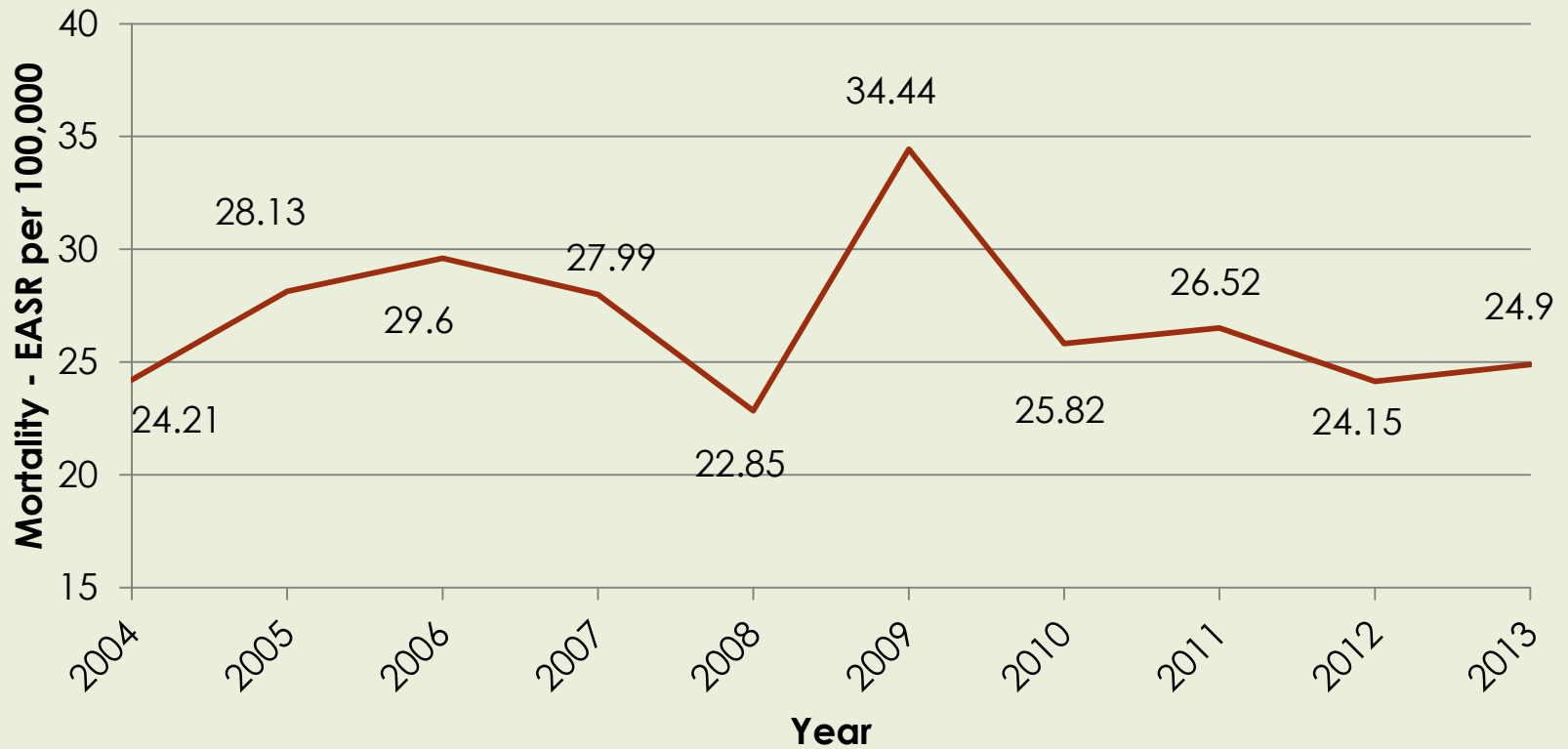
Breast cancer incidence

Breast Cancer Incidence trends - Females - EASR



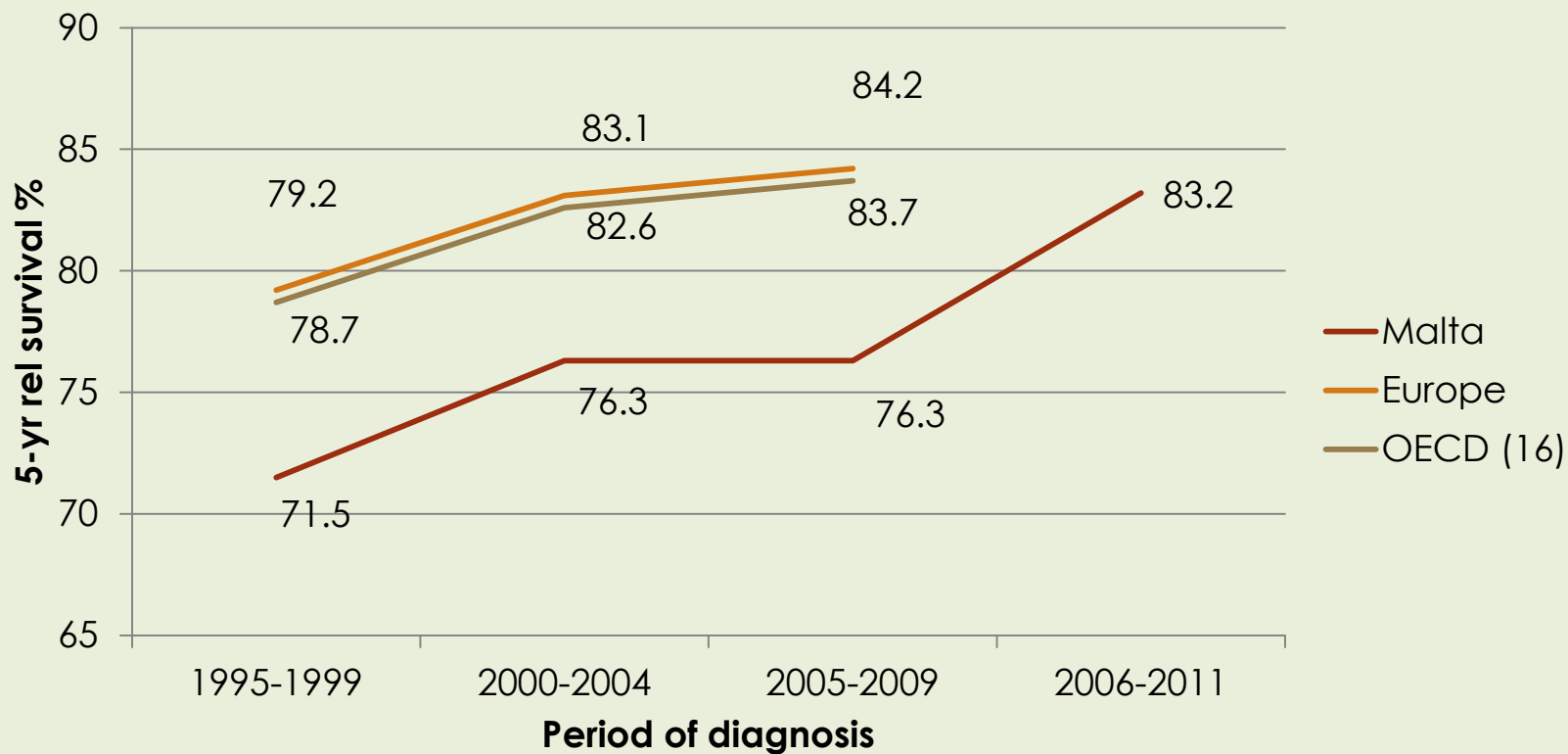
Breast cancer mortality

**Breast Cancer Mortality Trends - Females - EASR
2004-2013**



5-year survival rates

Trends in 5-yr relative survival - Europe/Malta
Breast - Females



Breast Cancer Care



- One **Breast Care Clinic** (since 2000)
 - Caters for diagnosis, surgical treatment and follow-up
- One **Population-based Mammography screening unit** (since 2009)
 - Separate from Breast care unit
- Oncological treatment and palliative care is managed at the **Oncology centre**
 - New centre inaugurated in 2015
- All **THREE** units join in a weekly **MDT meeting**

Breast Cancer Screening

A **national population-based** breast cancer screening service is in place which refers patient directly to the Breast care unit

- ▶ **Age groups:** 50-65*
- ▶ **Frequency of invites:** 3 years

2013 records

- ▶ **Invitation Coverage:** 87.1% of target population
- ▶ **Participation rate:** 58.1% of invited persons
- ▶ **Further assessment rate:** 10.3% of those screened
- ▶ **Treatment referral rate:** 6.1/1000 screened
- ▶ **Positive Predictive value:** 6.0% of those who required follow up were found to have CIS/invasive disease
- ▶ **Benign treatment rate:** 0.70 per 1000 screened

Breast Care Clinic

- Virtually **all breast cancer cases in Malta** are seen by this unit
 - Approx. 300 per year
- **Not accredited or certified** to date
 - Presently ongoing working underway with a view of conforming with the quality indicators within the **EUSOMA** framework
- **No regulation of training standards or CME** (to date) of the core team as defined in the *European Guidelines 2006*.

Human resources

- 2 (+1) breast surgeons
- 2 (+1) radiologists
- Pathologists
- 2 oncologists (both radiation oncologists)
- Geneticist
- Breast care nurses & screening nurses
- Radiographers
- Data manager (recent addition)

Imaging resources

The imaging equipment available and planned includes:

- ▶ two **full field digital mammography machines** with **stereo guided equipment**
- ▶ a **Tomosynthesis equipment** has been requested
- ▶ new **ultrasound equipment** used for recalls and biopsies is equipped with **2D and 3D probes**
- ▶ new **ultrasound equipment** with breast strain/shear wave elastography
- ▶ **MRI** used is a **3 Tesla** with **dedicated** breast software
- ▶ In early 2016 acquiring a dedicated **vacuum assisted MRI stereotactic equipment**

Radiotherapy resources

The radiotherapy equipment and capabilities available in Malta to date include:

- **3 Linear Accelerators:** 2 of which are enabled for **IMRT and IGRT** (2 x Elekta Versa HD and 1 x Elekta Platform)
- **Planning Stations** – XIO and MONACO systems
- **1 Large Bore CT Simulator**
- Patients requiring **Brachytherapy** are currently referred to a Centre in the UK.

Multi-disciplinary team meetings (MDM)

One MDM is held on a **weekly basis**. The following cases are discussed:

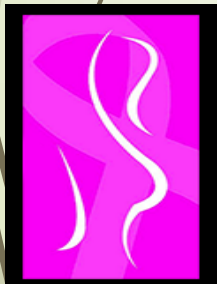
- cases in which the diagnosis is as yet **uncertain** e.g. following core biopsy
- cases **after the triple assessment** and all cases having a **recall at screening**
- cases in whom the diagnosis of cancer (and staging) is **confirmed** and who may be considered for **primary medical therapy**
- all cases **following surgery** on receipt of the histo-pathology for discussion of further care
- cases in follow-up who recently have undergone diagnostic investigations for possible symptoms of **recurrent or advancing disease**

Palliative care and allied healthcare services

- ▶ Referrals for palliative care
 - ▶ From the Breast Unit teams at MDH, other MDH departments, the oncology department, the rehabilitation hospital, long-term care residences, and family practice
- ▶ Initial assessment
 - ▶ Carried out by **palliative care specialist**
- ▶ Allied healthcare and other services
 - ▶ occupational therapy, physiotherapy, psychology, social work, spiritual director, tissue viability unit and Hospice Malta (a non-governmental organisation).
 - ▶ **Two patient support groups**

Patient information

- Breast cancer treatment booklets
 - Diagnosis and early stage breast cancer information
 - Advanced (metastatic) breast cancer treatment
- Breast cancer screening leaflets
- Information disseminated by patient support groups



*Action for Breast
Cancer Foundation*



Other services

- Post-op physiotherapy
- Adjuvant therapies
- Follow-up care
- Benign disease
- Genetics
- Prosthesis
- Lymphoedema clinic

Training and Research activities

Training

- Senior surgery and imaging trainees are sent **abroad** for **subspecialty training**
- Other training and CPD is mainly organised **locally**

Research

- Research focused on:
 - **Needs** of patients and their families
 - Identify service **gaps**
 - Map out **holistic care pathways**
- Internal audits: presently charting breast cancer care pathway
- Clinical trials: more common in the past; trying to revive activity

Conclusions

- Comprehensive breast cancer care services are offered in Malta.
- To date, these services are not governed by any specific legal or regulatory requirements.
- These services have not as yet been awarded or included in a national or international accreditation or certification system.
- At different levels (including both national and individual organisational levels), there is works in progress to introduce applicable accreditation and certification systems.
- In contact with National Accreditation Board – Malta. Preparing for a joint national seminar in early 2016 - The implications of accreditation on the health care services

