

FIGHT AGAINST BREAST CANCER

Author: PETRA, Ștefan – Sociologist, Statistics Dept of Local Health Authority in Cluj

Appeared in “Faclia” newspaper, Cluj Napoca, 10 March .2008, Social Section

English Translation by Violeta Horhoianu

On March 5 and 6, 2008 in Cluj, the Susan G. Komen for the Cure Global Initiative for Breast Cancer Awareness kicked off its first training, targeted to create sustainable programs for education about breast cancer. The workshop was organized by SECS Bucharest and the trainers were Dr. Violeta Horhoianu and Carmen Boscaneanu. Among the trainees there were Community Nurses, Doctors, Psychologists, journalists, etc.

The main topics of this first part of the training concerned the general area of breast cancer incidence, demographic groups of women, groups at risk, early detection modalities during stages I and II of the disease - when survival chances are obviously much higher – and the situation of the detection of the breast cancer in Romania. An important part of the training was dedicated to modalities of achievement of a Community Profile regarding the breast cancer and to the issue of Volunteerism (role and place of volunteers in society, specifically in non-governmental organizations). In Western Countries and particularly in the USA, there is a high number of volunteers supporting many kinds of activities; for example, Komen for the Cure, based in Dallas, USA - the biggest organization in the world dedicated to the fight against breast cancer - is able to mobilize 1 million citizens for the activities the organization implements.

One of the guest speakers in the workshop was Dr. Florian Nicula from the Institute of Oncology Cluj Napoca, a member of the National Cancer Committee, who presented to the attendees extremely important data on the breast cancer situation in Romania and in the European Union, insisting on the importance of the needs in breast screening both at present and in the future. Dr. Nicula mentioned that we refer to a chronic disease, which may easily recur and which is at present the number one cause of death among female population in Europe and the number three cause in Romania. He also pointed out that through screening, one quarter of breast cancer deaths may be prevented in Romania; unfortunately, in our country the present infrastructure is far from sufficient (lack of mammography machines, lack of pathologists /radiologists and oncologists specializing in the most recent information and practices). At the Cluj Institute for Oncology, breast cancer represents 22% of the total cases of cancers, of which 43% are detected in a late stages- IIIrd or IVth. An extremely important topic is breast self exam (BSE); the majority of women, especially those over 40 years of age, at which time the incidence rate is highest, should be trained in BSE.

Very interesting practical sessions with engaging and constructive discussions took place regarding the aforementioned topics during the workshop; the discussion was sometimes controversial among participants, due to wide range of backgrounds of the participants.