

**Dear Readers,**

It is with a mix of pride and bitterness that we present to you the third and final issue of 2024, as I prepare to step down from my role as Editor-in-Chief. After a journey full of hard work, unforgettable experiences and cherished friendships, I now pass the torch to Sila Ece Tiryaki, whose editorial vision and leadership will bring Turkish Medical Student Journal (TMSJ) to new heights. Her immaculate work ethic and dedication have been inspirational to us all, which made her an invaluable member of our editorial board throughout her time in TMSJ.

As October is both when we publish our last issue of the year and Breast Cancer Awareness Month, I would not like to leave without sharing some final reflections on the matter. Breast cancer is the second most diagnosed cancer worldwide and the most common non-skin malignancy in women, which is expected to affect one in eight women in their lifetime and claim the lives of one in 43 (1, 2). There have been 2.3 million new cases and 670,000 deaths in 2022 globally, representing a public health issue "no ministry of health can overlook" (2, 3). As breast cancer continues to put tremendous strain upon healthcare providers, patients and their families, it is vital to take the necessary preventive measures and be aware of the risk factors associated with this malignancy. Since only 10-20% of breast cancers are caused by inherited gene mutations such as *BRCA1* and *BRCA2*, and many hormone-related risk factors such as age of menarche, age of menopause, history of pregnancy and history of breastfeeding are mostly not modifiable, the majority of breast cancer cases cannot be prevented through primary prevention (2). Therefore, a more sensible approach would be to invest in early-detection programs in order to detect and treat breast cancer in its early stages (stages I and II), ensuring the implementation of the most effective, tolerable and cost-effective treatment regimens available (2).

It has been suggested that breast self-examination has possible utility in low-income countries where access to mammography is not widely available. Although data regarding the effectiveness of breast self-examination in the developing world is limited, self-examination education and its role in decreasing the burden of breast cancer still appear as a matter of debate (4). Despite this controversy, it should also not be overlooked that patients who are aware of the symptoms of breast cancer and are familiar with their own anatomy may be more likely to seek treatment in the earlier stages of the disease.

Mammography screening has substantially reduced the mortality associated with breast cancer. A reduction of 41% in breast cancers fatal within 10 years after diagnosis among women who underwent mammography screening, and a 25% reduction in the incidence of advanced breast cancer have been reported. Early detection of breast cancer through mammography screening leads to a significant reduction in the risk of death from the disease (5). Therefore, the American College of Radiology recommends breast cancer screening for all average-risk women from the age of 40 (6).

The importance of breast cancer awareness, which we highlight in this final issue of 2024, remains a crucial subject for public health. As healthcare providers, patients and their families continue to face the hardships caused by this disease, early detection through mammography and education on breast self-examination could be vital tools for preventing its devastating consequences.

As I bid farewell to my role as Editor-in-Chief, I wish to express my deepest gratitude for the opportunities, experiences, and friendships that have made my time here a truly treasured one. With Sila Ece Tiryaki taking the helm, I am confident that TMSJ will continue to thrive, inspiring young researchers with the same passion and dedication that has guided us thus far. Thank you for your never-ending support, and I look forward to seeing TMSJ flourish in the years to come.

Yours truly,

Eylül Şenödeyici

Editor-in-Chief, Turkish Medical Student Journal

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