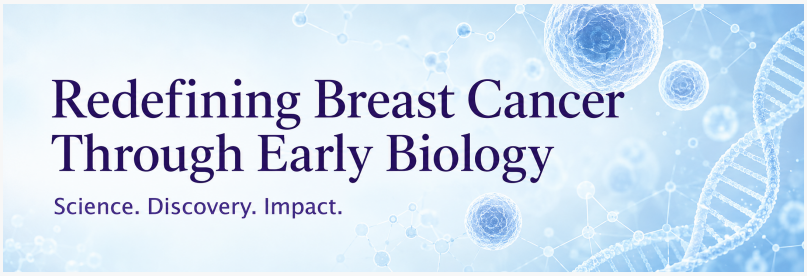
Young Women’s Breast Cancer Research Institute Launches as First-of-Its-Kind Early Biology Research Institute

Young Women’s Breast Cancer Research Institute advances research on the early biology, detection, interruption, and prevention of breast cancer in young women.

The Young Women’s Breast Cancer Research Institute (YWBCRI)



Driving Theme of The Institute.

DENVER, CO, UNITED STATES, June 16, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Breast Cancer in Young Women Foundation (BCYW Foundation), USA, today announced the launch of the Young Women’s Breast Cancer Research Institute, USA (YWBCRI), the first-of-its-kind research institute dedicated to advancing breast cancer research for young women by moving science earlier — before cancer becomes clinically visible.

YWBCRI has been established to address a critical gap in breast cancer research: why breast cancer develops early in some women, what biological changes occur at the interface between the pre-cancerous state and diagnosis, and how science can create pathways that may one day help us detect, interrupt, and prevent the disease earlier

“BCYW Foundation was created to advance research on breast cancer in young women, with a focus on early biology as part of its mission to support advanced research, targeted awareness, education, and advocacy. With the launch of YWBCRI, we are now extending that mission into discovery science — building the scientific infrastructure to understand the disease earlier and ultimately change its future,” said Rakesh Kumar, PhD, Founding Institute Scientific Director of YWBCRI, and Founder and CEO of the Breast Cancer in Young Women Foundation, USA.

Rather than focusing only on breast cancer after a tumor is detected, the institute will move discovery upstream — toward the earliest biological changes that may begin years before clinical diagnosis.

FOUR INSTITUTE SITES, ONE SHARED MISSION

YWBCRI is being established with four hub sites across the USA, Europe, South Asia, and East Asia, all contributing to a shared research mission focused on breast cancer in young women. Together, these sites will form a collaborative research network that links laboratory discoveries, clinical insights, biospecimen-based studies, early detection initiatives, and international academic partnerships.

The network will advance YWBCRI's objectives in translational research, clinical collaboration, and early biological studies, while recognizing region-specific patterns, subtypes, and biological differences in breast cancer among young women.

The multi-site model builds on the BCYW Foundation's broader international work in science, education, awareness, and clinical collaboration. It also lays the foundation for future partnerships across the United States, Europe, India, Japan, and other regions where the Foundation has established strong scientific and institutional relationships.

The institute is also designed to expand through senior scientific leadership and future hubs at major breast cancer research centers.

Dr. Marie Jeanne Vrancken Peeters, MD, PhD, a professor at the Netherlands Cancer Institute and Amsterdam University Medical Center, and a member of the YWBCRI Executive Committee, said: "Research on breast cancer in young women is essential because breast cancer can affect women at any age. Early detection saves lives, and an international institute with a global network of hubs can accelerate innovation, deepen biological insight, and improve outcomes for young women worldwide. We are dedicated to this mission and look forward to Amsterdam joining the YWBCRI as a fifth hub as soon as possible."

A FIELD-DEFINING SCIENTIFIC HYPOTHESIS

Unlike conventional research models that often begin after a tumor is detected, YWBCRI is designed to move discovery upstream. Its central hypothesis is that early-onset breast cancer research may begin long before a tumor appears — when normal biology quietly goes off course. By focusing on early biological signals, tissue context, biological timing, systemic changes, and the transition from normal biology to disease, YWBCRI aims to create a dedicated platform for earlier understanding of breast cancer among young women.

"The launch of YWBCRI represents a pivotal milestone in breast cancer research for young women. By targeting the earliest biological changes that might occur before the disease

becomes clinically apparent, YWBCRI establishes a new platform for discovery, collaboration, and translational research. As a global institute, it uniquely unites leading scientists, clinicians, and research facilities around a common goal: to detect breast cancer earlier in young women than ever before. As the Clinical Director of the Institute and Director of the YWBCRI-FMUL Lisbon site, I am eager to advance this mission and support a worldwide scientific effort focused on early detection, prompt intervention, and improved outcomes for young women."

If this hypothesis is correct, early-onset breast cancer is not simply an unpredictable event that begins at diagnosis. It may be a biological process that develops over time — and therefore may be detectable, interruptible, and potentially preventable.

"For too long, breast cancer in young women has been approached mainly after the disease becomes visible," said Dr. Kumar. "YWBCRI asks a different question: what happens before the tumor appears?"

WHY THIS INSTITUTE IS NEEDED NOW

Breast cancer in young women is not simply breast cancer occurring earlier on the calendar. It often intersects with reproductive biology, dense breast tissue, pregnancy and postpartum changes, hereditary risk, delayed diagnosis, aggressive tumor features, fertility decisions, parenting, career development, and long-term survivorship.

Despite these realities, young women remain underrepresented in many research frameworks, screening strategies, prevention models, and biological studies. YWBCRI is designed to provide a dedicated scientific home for this field.

Dr. Paul Fisher, Professor and Thelma Newmeyer Corman Endowed Chair of Cancer Research at the VCU Massey Comprehensive Cancer Center and a member of the Scientific Advisory Board of the YWBCRI, said, "Research on diseases with smaller affected populations often receives limited priority. This is especially true for breast cancer in women under 40, which can be aggressive, biologically complex, and difficult to treat. Despite these challenges, support for prevention, early detection, and better therapies remains limited. The establishment of the Young Women's Breast Cancer Research Institute, which brings together top scientists, physician-scientists, and clinicians focused on this unmet need, is a significant and timely step forward. By leveraging specialized expertise in the biology of breast cancer in young women, YWBCRI seeks to develop new insights that could lead to improved strategies, treatments, and patient outcomes."

"Building a care team that is passionate about rigorous research and compassionate patient care is essential, not only to produce scientific reports but also for patient survival and well-being," said Carlos García-Cantú, MD, Chief, Department of Surgery, and Chairman, DHR Health NAPBC Breast Center of Excellence, Texas, USA, and the Director of the YWBCRI-DHR Health. "This approach is especially critical when caring for young breast cancer patients, whose needs extend significantly beyond older populations."

“Young women’s breast cancer prevention, early detection, improved treatment outcomes, enhanced survival, and better quality of life are increasingly recognized as critical priorities for women across Asia,” said Masakazu Toi, MD, PhD, Director of the Tokyo Metropolitan Cancer and Infectious Disease Center, Tokyo, and Director of the YWBCRI-KUMP Tokyo, Japan. “To address these challenges effectively, we need more refined and truly integrated precision medicine, along with a stronger fusion of clinical medicine, translational science, and young women’s well-being. The YWBCRI can serve as a foundational platform for this purpose, with our institution functioning as a hub for Japan and the broader Asian region.”

Dr. Ashok K. Vaid, MD, DM, Chairman, Medanta Cancer Institute, and Director of YWBCRI-Medanta, Gurugram, India, said that “Breast cancer in young women is an increasingly important clinical challenge in India, where earlier recognition, risk understanding, and prevention-focused research are critically needed. He further added that “YWBCRI has established a dedicated international BCYW research platform to connect Indian clinical issues with global research efforts and to explore early biological changes in breast cancer among young women. At Medanta, we are committed to supporting research aimed at earlier detection, intervention, and disease prevention in the future."

The launch of YWBCRI marks a new phase in the global effort to define breast cancer in young women as a distinct scientific priority. Its mission is not only to improve knowledge after diagnosis, but to ask what happens before diagnosis — and whether earlier biology can open new paths toward prevention.

FROM AWARENESS TO DISCOVERY

BCYWF has built a global platform for breast health education, youth engagement, professional collaboration, scientific meetings, international outreach, and public awareness focused on breast cancer in young women.

The launch of YWBCRI represents the next major step: transforming awareness into discovery.

The institute’s mission is not only to improve treatment after diagnosis, but to help create a future in which breast cancer in young women can be recognized earlier, understood more deeply, and ultimately prevented more effectively.

“Awareness tells young women that breast cancer can happen. Research must now tell us why it happens, when it begins, and how we can stop it earlier,” said Dr. Kumar. “That is the purpose of YWBCRI.”

ABOUT
The Young Women’s Breast Cancer Research Institute (YWBCRI) is a U.S.-based research institute launched by the Breast Cancer in Young Women Foundation, USA, to advance research on the

early biology, detection, interruption, and prevention of breast cancer in young women. Through a four-site collaborative research network, YWBCRI connects scientific, clinical, academic, and translational expertise to move breast cancer discovery upstream.

The Breast Cancer in Young Women Foundation (BCYWF) is a U.S.-based nonprofit organization dedicated to breast cancer in young women. The BCYW Foundation brings together a diverse network of scientists, oncologists, surgeons, survivors, NGOs, and partners from 35 countries. The foundation is advancing its targeted awarenessss and research efforts and highlighting emerging advances in BCYW through its peer-reviewed, open-access Journal of Young Women's Breast Cancer and Health. The BCYWF is also conducting innovative research in early-onset breast cancer in young women through the Young Women's Breast Cancer Research Institute. Through evidence-based analysis, the Foundation works to improve outcomes and long-term survivorship horizons for young women diagnosed with breast cancer.

Rakesh Kumar, PhD, Founding Institute Scientific Director
Young Women's Breast Cancer Research Institute (YWBCRI)
+1 303-900-8066
rakeshkumar@ywbcri.org
Visit us on social media:
LinkedIn
Bluesky
Instagram
YouTube
X
