

The L'viv Center for Women's General and Breast Health is affiliated with the Hospital of the L'viv Railroad. Its services can be broken down as seen in Figure 1.

The employees of the Center concentrate on providing medical help and diagnostic services, consultations, and classes to women and their families, addressing issues impacting women's health. For many women, their OB/GYN is the one physician she will go to, no matter what the problem. This makes it especially important for the physician to be trained in all types of clinical and screening procedures specific to the health of women. The staff of the WWC includes two OB/GYNs, a surgeon-oncologist with a specialization in mammary gland treatment, two ultrasound specialists, a radiologist, a psychologist, a cosmetologist-dermatologist, a receptionist, a service coordinator, eight nurses, and five junior medical employees.

Lab services play a significant role in the WWC's operations and the laboratory has the ability to perform cytology, biochemical blood work-ups, and urine testing.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE L'VIV WWC

Lab service plays a significant role in the operation of the WWC in L'viv.

Лабораторная служба играет существенную роль в работе Львовского Центра здоровья женщин.

The breast health program established at the Center has proven to be a success, and the cooperation between OB/GYNs and oncologists has been instrumental in advancing our existing system of breast health prophylactics and annual screenings to a higher technological level. OB/GYNs now have the best opportunities for detecting any breast abnormalities during screening. Prior to the inception of this program, our admittedly limited ex-

perience and technology allowed us to mainly diagnose breast cancer at stages II, III, and IV. Now we predominantly diagnose at earlier stages.

Full ultrasound and mammography facilities substantially expand the scope of our diagnostic services, such as needle localization of nonpalpable growths, sonographically monitored aspirational biopsy of new glandular growths, and core-biopsy of glandular growths. Our facilities and lab enable the Center to provide a full range of quality treatment options to patients in an efficient and timely manner and to offer a diagnosis at pre-clinical, non-palpable stages of the disease.

Our experience has shown that early diagnostics allows us to:

- extend the life of our Stage I and Stage II patients;
- improve the quality of life through timely and appropriate screening and referral intervention; and
- alleviate the psychological trauma to the individual and her family.

Patients, and even medical professionals, often consider diagnoses such as diabetes or stroke to be less important than cancer, which to them sounds like a verdict of death. Many patients believe their life starts to run its course with increasing speed the older they get and don't think they should waste time on screenings or exams if nothing hurts and when treatment is useless. We hold a different view. While breast screening has not decreased our number of cancer patients, the majority of our cases have moved from Stage IV to Stages I and II, meaning each patient has a greater chance of survival.

The Center has used the media and local support groups extensively to advertise both our services and the importance of breast health awareness. This creates opportunities for improv-

L'viv, Ukraine

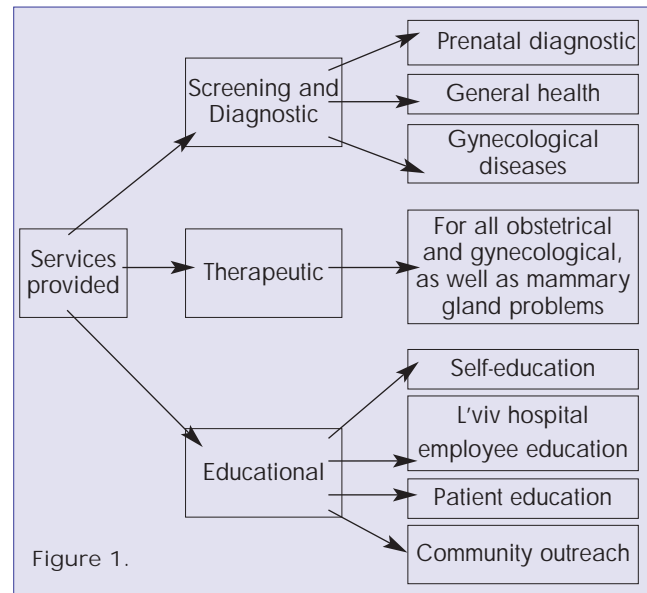


Figure 1.

ing early diagnoses by emphasizing the correlation between "screening and diagnostics."

The Center also works with a local NGO, "Women to Women," on anti-trafficking and domestic violence issues in Ukraine.

We believe that the Center for Women's Health is not simply an institution that has to be visited for recovery purposes, but rather a place that can help women of all ages to avoid serious health concerns.

ABOUT THE L'VIV WWC

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AIHA partnership: L'viv/Bufalo

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