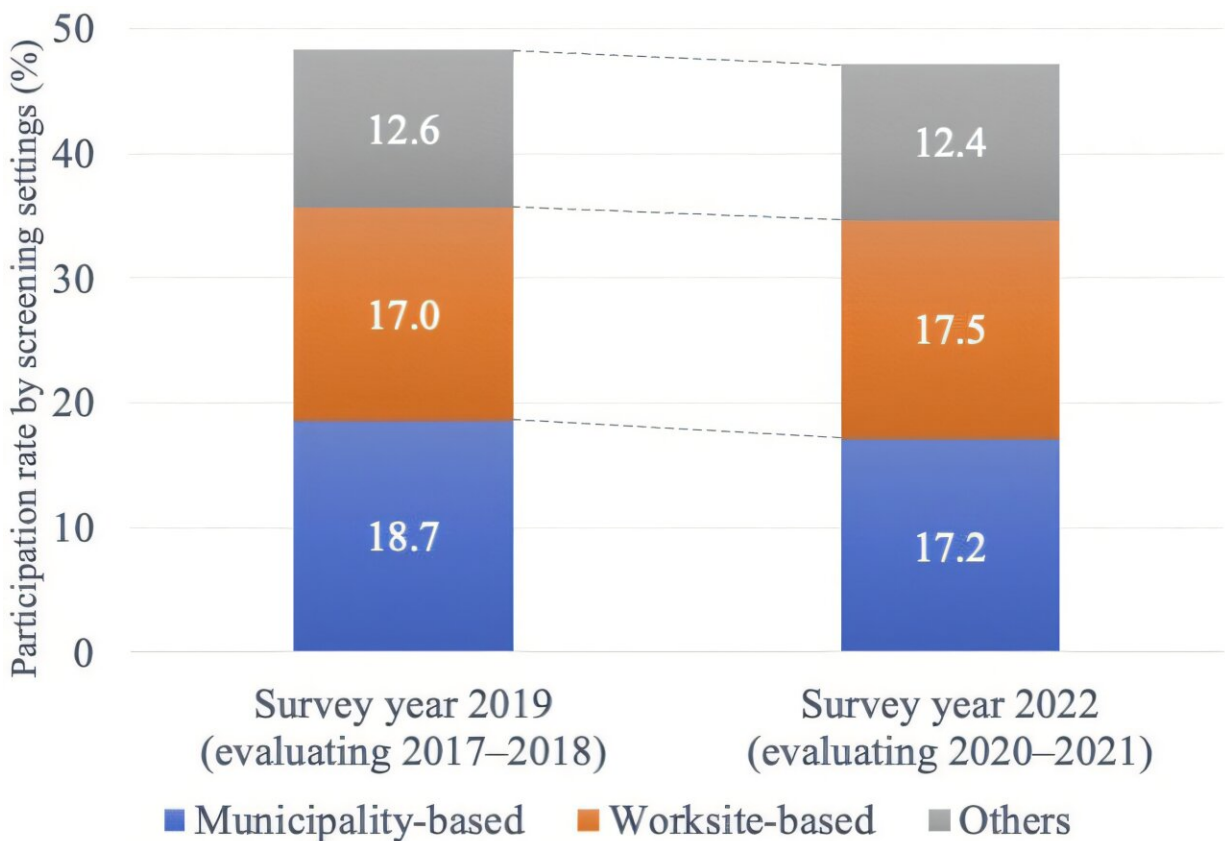


Japan study finds decline in breast cancer screening participation rates during the COVID-19 pandemic

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Participation rate of breast cancer screening by screening settings. Credit: *JMA Journal* (2025). DOI: 10.31662/jmaj.2024-0234

During the COVID pandemic, breast cancer screening participation rates declined worldwide. However, in Japan, nationwide changes in the rate of breast cancer screening before and during the pandemic remained unclear.

Researchers from the University of Tsukuba conducted a secondary analysis of data from the 2019 and 2022 Comprehensive Survey of Living Conditions (household and health surveys) to examine changes in breast cancer [screening](#) participation rates before and during the [pandemic](#). They also identified subgroups with large decreases in participation rates. The study is [published](#) in the *JMA Journal*.

Results showed that the screening participation rate was 48.3% before the pandemic (18.7% in municipality-based, 17.0% in worksite-based, and 12.6% in other settings) and 47.1% during the pandemic (17.2%, 17.5%, and 12.4%, respectively). The overall screening participation rate declined during the pandemic.

In terms of the screening setting, the rate decreased in municipalities but increased in worksites. In subgroup analyses, the screening participation rate largely decreased in the 45–49 age subgroup among the age subgroups, the towns/villages subgroup among the living area subgroups, the high school subgroup and the vocational school/junior or technical college subgroup among the educational level subgroups, and the employee insurance (dependent person) subgroup among the health insurance subgroups.

In the Fourth Basic Plan to Promote Cancer Control Programs, which the Cabinet approved in March 2023, the government seeks to increase the cancer screening rate to 60% or more. To achieve this goal for [breast cancer](#) screening, they need again to improve the screening rate, which declined during the pandemic, and raise awareness among the general population and those involved in cancer screening.

More information: Change in Breast Cancer Screening Participation during COVID-19 Based on the 2019 and 2022 Comprehensive Survey of Living Conditions in Japan, *JMA Journal* (2025). [DOI: 10.31662/jmaj.2024-0234](https://doi.org/10.31662/jmaj.2024-0234)

Provided by University of Tsukuba

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