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Regional disparities in breast cancer histopathological examination turnaround time: a 5-year comparative analysis in Brazil

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Objective: This study aimed to compare the turnaround time for histopathological examination in cases of breast cancer among the regions of Brazil over the last 5 years. **Methodology:** A retrospective study of descriptive and quantitative nature was conducted using secondary data obtained from the Cancer Information System (SISCAN), available on the DATASUS electronic platform. It evaluated Brazil's turnaround time for breast cancer histopathological examinations, covering the collection, laboratory arrival, and result release intervals over the past 5 years (2019–2023), comparing data across the nation's five regions. **Results:** The Central-West region demonstrated slightly the best percentage of examination completion within 30 days (65.8%), with 16.3% finalized after 60 days. The South region followed, with 65.3% of histopathological examinations completed within 30 days, and only 13.5% conducted after 60 days. Maintaining good performance, the Southeast region presented 65.1% of examinations reported within 30 days, with 14.1% released after 60 days. Meanwhile, the North and Northeast regions showed lower percentages of process completion within 30 days, with 47.3% and 50.1% of examinations, respectively. The percentage of analyses released only after 60 days is also higher, corresponding to 23.8% in the North region and 25.5% in the Northeast. In light of the foregoing, national data indicate an average of 58.5% of examinations reported within the first 30 days, with 18.9% of these released after 60 days. **Conclusion:** The results reveal significant variations in the turnaround time for histopathological examination of breast cancer cases among the regions of Brazil. These disparities underscore the importance of health policies aimed at optimizing diagnostic procedures in the country, especially in the context of breast cancer, where early detection plays a crucial role in the treatment and prognosis of patients.

Keywords: biopsy; breast cancer; socioeconomic disparities in health.