



SCREENING FOR BREAST AND CERVICAL CANCER AMONG WOMEN IN GHANA



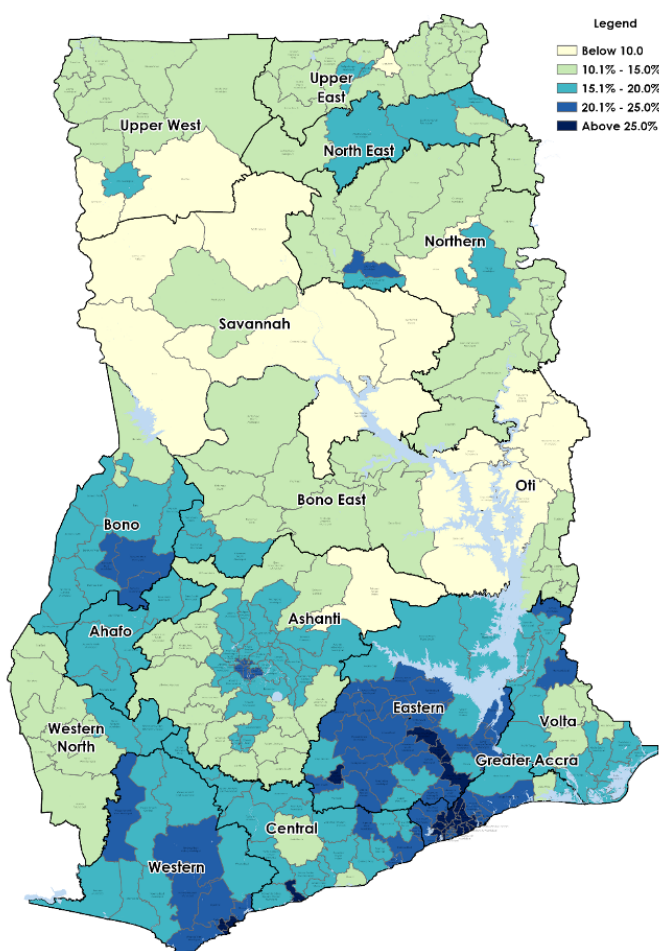
This thematic brief provides a comprehensive analysis of breast and cervical cancer screening among women aged 15-49 across the 261 districts in Ghana using data from the 2021 Population and Housing Census (PHC) and the 2022 Demographic and Health Survey. It provides evidence for policymakers, health practitioners and civil society organisations to develop context-specific interventions to encourage the uptake of breast and cervical cancer screening.

Breast Cancer Screening: Refers to a doctor/healthcare provider examining or radiological examination of the breasts of a woman for cancer. The breast examination could be a clinical breast examination or medical equipment to make an image of the breast tissue.

Cervical Cancer Screening: Refers to a doctor or other healthcare provider ever testing a woman for cervical cancer. The cervical cancer test could either be a Pap smear, HPV test or a visual inspection with acetic acid (VIA). With the VIA, the doctor or other healthcare provider applies vinegar to a woman's cervix and observes the reaction.

Breast Cancer Screening

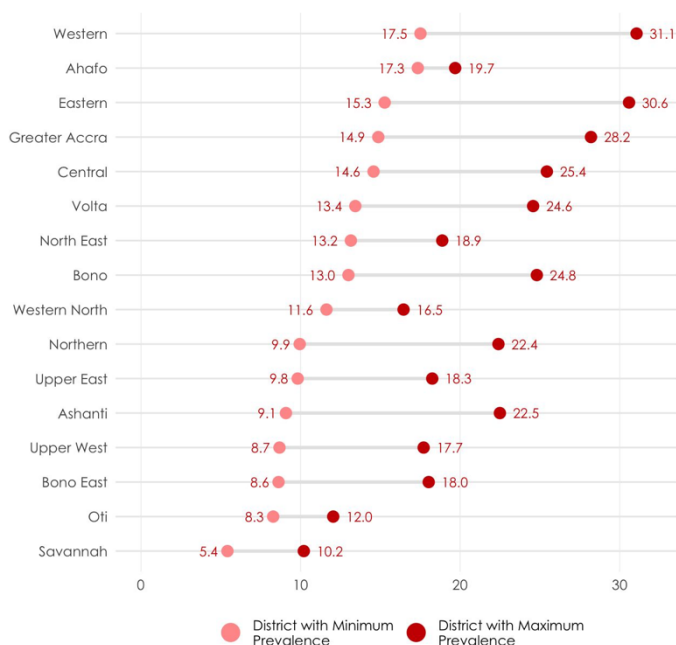
Only 16.3% of women in Ghana have undergone breast cancer screening, reflecting low overall participation nationwide.



Across the five northern regions, most districts recorded breast cancer screening rates below 20.0 percent, except regional capitals such as Tamale, Wa, Nalerigu, and Bolgatanga.

In contrast, southern districts reported screening rates above 15.0 percent, with all districts in the Eastern and Western regions exceeding this threshold.

Regional Variations in District-Level Breast Cancer Screening



The Eastern Region recorded the widest intra-regional gap in breast cancer screening, with a difference of **15.3** percentage points between its highest and lowest districts. In contrast, the Ahafo Region showed the smallest variation at **2.3** percentage points. Notably, the highest-performing district in the Savannah Region, with a screening percent of **10.2%**, recorded a lower percentage than the districts with minimum prevalence in nine other regions, underscoring the overall low coverage in the north.

Breast Cancer Screening Rates in Top and Bottom 20 Districts

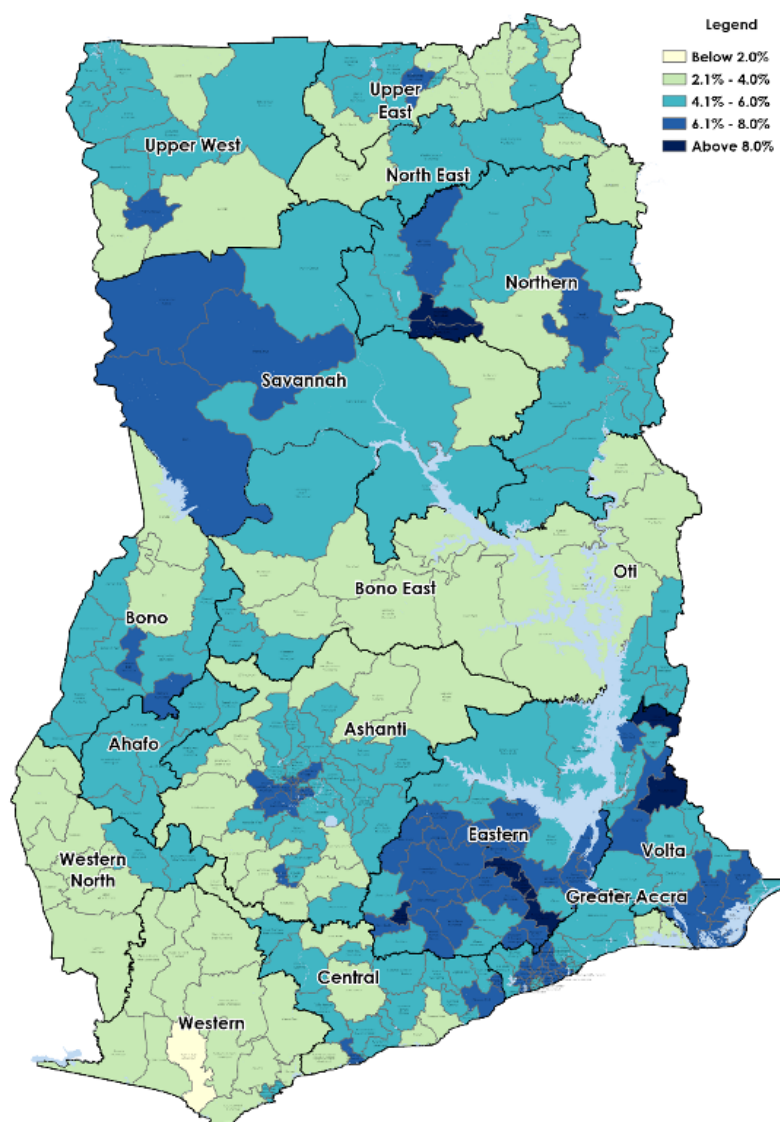
Top 20 Districts

S/N	Region	District	Breast Cancer Screening Rate (%)
1	Western	Effia Kwesimintsim Municipal	31.1
2	Eastern	New Juaben South Municipal	30.6
3	Western	Sekondi Takoradi Metropolitan Area (STMA)	29.1
4	Greater Accra	Tema West Municipal	28.2
5	Greater Accra	Ayawaso West Municipal	27.9
6	Eastern	New Juaben North Municipal	27.6
7	Greater Accra	Ga East Municipal	27.5
8	Greater Accra	La Dade-Kotopon Municipal	27.3
9	Greater Accra	Adentan Municipal	27.3
10	Eastern	Birim Central Municipal	26.6
11	Greater Accra	Ga Central Municipal	26.5
12	Greater Accra	La Nkwantanang Madina Municipal	26.5
13	Greater Accra	Ga North Municipal	26.2
14	Greater Accra	Krowor Municipal	26.2
15	Eastern	Abuakwa North Municipal	26.1
16	Greater Accra	Weija Gbawe Municipal	25.9
17	Greater Accra	Okaikoi North Municipal	25.8
18	Greater Accra	Ablekuma North Municipal	25.7
19	Central	Cape Coast Metropolitan Area (CCMA)	25.4
20	Greater Accra	Ledzokuku Municipal	25.4

Bottom 20 Districts

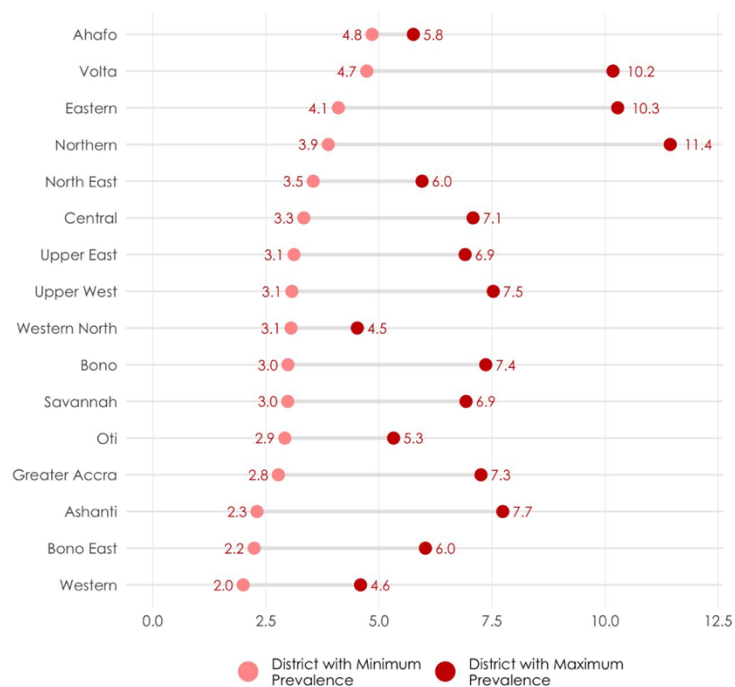
S/N	Region	District	Breast Cancer Screening Rate (%)
1	Upper West	Sissala West	10.4
2	Upper East	Binduri	10.3
3	Savannah	West Gonja	10.2
4	Northern	Mion	9.9
5	Oti	Nkwanta South Municipal	9.9
6	Upper East	Nabdam	9.8
7	Oti	Krachi West Municipal	9.7
8	Oti	Krachi East Municipal	9.4
9	Upper West	Wa West	9.3
10	Ashanti	Sekyere Afram Plains	9.1
11	Savannah	Bole	9.1
12	Upper West	Wa East	8.7
13	Savannah	Sawla Tuna Kalba	8.7
14	Oti	Krachi Nchumuru	8.6
15	Bono East	Sene East	8.6
16	Oti	Nkwanta North	8.3
17	Savannah	East Gonja Municipal	7.7
18	Savannah	North Gonja	7.2
19	Savannah	Central Gonja	7.0
20	Savannah	North East Gonja	5.4

Cervical cancer screening remains critically low with just 4.4% of women in Ghana have been screened



Cervical cancer screening in Ghana remains very low, with the **Northern (6.7%)**, **Volta (6.4%)**, and **Eastern (6.3%)** regions recording the highest participation. The **Savannah** Region reported the lowest uptake at **1.6%**, while **Western (2.9%)**, **Oti (3.1%)**, and **Upper West (3.7%)** regions also recorded rates below 4%. Even in major regions such as the **Greater Accra Region (5.5%)** and **Ashanti Region (5.7%)**, participation remains modest, underscoring the persistently low national coverage of cervical cancer screening.

Regional Variations in District-Level Cervical Cancer Screening



Northern Region had the highest intra-regional disparity in cervical cancer screening, recording **9.4 percentage points**, while in Ahafo Region it is a **1.0 percentage point** difference

Cervical Cancer Screening Rates in Top and Bottom 20 Districts

Top 20 Districts

S/N	Region	District	Cervical Cancer Screening Rate (%)
1	Northern	Sagnarigu Municipal	11.4
2	Eastern	New Juaben South Municipal	10.3
3	Volta	Ho Municipal	10.2
4	Northern	Tamale Metropolitan Area (TMA)	9.4
5	Eastern	New Juaben North Municipal	9.0
6	Eastern	Birim Central Municipal	8.5
7	Eastern	Abuakwa North Municipal	8.4
8	Volta	Hohoe Municipal	8.3
9	Eastern	Akwapim North Municipal	8.2
10	Eastern	Nsawam Adoagyiri Municipal	7.9
11	Ashanti	Kwadaso Municipal	7.7
12	Upper West	Wa Municipal	7.5
13	Ashanti	Asokwa Municipal	7.5
14	Volta	Kpando Municipal	7.4
15	Bono	Sunyani Municipal	7.4
16	Eastern	Kwahu West Municipal	7.3
17	Ashanti	Kumasi Metropolitan Area (KMA)	7.3
18	Greater Accra	Tema West Municipal	7.3
19	Greater Accra	Ayawaso West Municipal	7.2
20	Ashanti	Oforikrom Municipal	7.2

Bottom 20 Districts

S/N	Region	District	Cervical Cancer Screening Rate (%)
1	Bono East	Sene West	3.1
2	Western North	Bia East	3.1
3	Bono	Banda	3.0
4	Savannah	North East Gonja	3.0
5	Western	Shama	2.9
6	Oti	Nkwanta North	2.9
7	Western	Ahanta West Municipal	2.8
8	Bono East	Pru West	2.8
9	Greater Accra	Ada West	2.8
10	Western	Prestea/Huni Valley Municipal	2.7
11	Western	Mpohor	2.6
12	Western	Wassa Amenfi West Municipal	2.5
13	Western	Ellembelle	2.4
14	Western	Jomoro Municipal	2.3
15	Ashanti	Sekyerere Afram Plains	2.3
16	Western	Wassa Amenfi East Municipal	2.3
17	Bono East	Sene East	2.2
18	Western	Wassa East	2.2
19	Western	Wassa Amenfi Central	2.1
20	Western	Nzema East Municipal	2.0

Key Takeaways and Policy Recommendations

Key Takeaways

- **Screening coverage remains low:** Breast and cervical cancer screening among women aged 15–49 is low nationwide, with large gaps among regions and across districts
- **District Disparities:** Breast Cancer screening ranges from 5.4% in North East Gonja to 31.1% in Effia Kwesimintim District, while cervical cancer screening varies from 2.0% in Nzema East to 11.4% in Sagnarigu Municipal, showing significant unevenness across districts
- **Northern regions lag behind:** The Savannah, Oti, and Western North regions record the lowest screening percentages, often below 10%, highlighting persistent inequities in access

Policy Recommendations

- **Expand community-based and mobile screening services:** Deploy mobile clinics and community outreach programmes to deliver breast and cervical cancer screening in underserved and remote areas.
- **Integrate cancer screening with primary healthcare:** Make breast and cervical cancer screening a routine service at all primary health facilities to increase accessibility and normalise early detection.
- **Launch targeted public awareness and education campaigns:** Launch targeted campaigns through local media and community/religious leaders to raise awareness, dispel myths, and encourage participation.
- Private sector may consider supporting awareness and public education campaigns across their operational areas across the country.