

Guernsey women have made difference

WOMEN in Guernsey have been praised for their part in the fight against breast cancer during a national awareness month.

Since 1961, about 11,000 women have been tested as part of the Guernsey Research Project, which has helped further the understanding of the causes this form of the disease.

In the early days, the study discovered a link between the illness and high levels of the hormone oestrogen.

The survey, which is the longest running population study on the disease, is still running and is investigating the genetic profile of women from all backgrounds and their susceptibility to breast cancer.

Professor Ian Fentiman, director of the project, has been working on the study for the past 30 years.

He said the pioneering work has revolutionised the world of medical research.

Speaking from Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital in London, where he is professor of surgical oncology, he said: The study is still going strong and the women that have been involved have played a major role in the understanding of breast cancer and paved the way for research into how this disease can be prevented.

'When it began more than 40 years ago, it was ground-breaking in that it tested normal women and showed a pre-existing abnormality of hormones was one reason for developing breast cancer.'

The medical expert joined the project in 1977 and said women

by Lynn Brown

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Professor Ian Fentiman, director of the Guernsey Breast Cancer Research Project

benefits from good medical services and accurate records.

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Every year about 50 women who are diagnosed with breast cancer and receive treatment at the Princess Elizabeth Hospital.

The disease largely affects older women and 50% of patients are over the age of 65.

Throughout this month, staff from the breast unit have organised a programme of events to raise awareness of the disease and the work of people devoted to research.

The latest scheme is the launch of a weight management course at the

from Guernsey were chosen Western Community Centre.
because of the high level of health
care on the island.

He added: The project is so special
because it has run for such a long
period of time.

Breast cancer has been
linked to obesity but the
classes are open to both
men and women.

'Guernsey was chosen not because
more women are diagnosed with
breast cancer, but because it has
a relatively stable population which

• For more information
about the course and Breast
Cancer Awareness Month
contact the health
promotion unit on 707311.

Article reproduced courtesy Guernsey Evening Press and Star 15/10/2005