



<b>Title</b>	<b>Time to Full Publication of Studies of Anti-Cancer Medicines for Breast Cancer, and the Potential for Publication Bias: A Short Systematic Review</b>
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## Aim

To identify the expected delay between publication of conference abstracts and full publication of results from trials of new anticancer agents for breast cancer and to identify apparent biases in publication and reporting.

## Conclusions and results

The review included 6 anticancer treatments for breast cancer. Interventions for early breast cancer were docetaxel, paclitaxel, and trastuzumab. Interventions for advanced or metastatic breast cancer were gemcitabine, lapatinib, and bevacizumab. Of the 18 included RCTs, only 4 publications (from 3 RCTs) reported the same outcomes in both an abstract and a full publication. Time between the abstract and full publication was 5 months in two cases, 7 months in one case, and 19 months in one case (overall mean delay=9 months). Eleven trials were identified where the data presented in an abstract or conference proceeding had not been fully published. The duration between publication of the abstracts and the end of August 2007 varied from 3 months to 38 months (mean delay 16.5 months). The longest delays in publication were for trials investigating gemcitabine (38 months) or bevacizumab (33 months). Observational analysis of the published and unpublished trials did not indicate any particular biases in terms of whether positive results were more likely to be fully published than nonsignificant ones. A limitation of this review is the small number of studies included. With a larger sample, investigation into the effect of publication delay on decision-making might be feasible.

## Recommendations

See Executive Summary link at [www.hta.ac.uk/project/1675.asp](http://www.hta.ac.uk/project/1675.asp).

## Methods

See Executive Summary link at [www.hta.ac.uk/project/1675.asp](http://www.hta.ac.uk/project/1675.asp).

## Further research/reviews required

Future research should include extension of this work to other anticancer drugs and investigation into the reasons for the lengthy delays to full publication noted for some trials.