

Breast / Cervical Screening Auditing

This month, IANZ will commence audit activities under the National Audit Programme established by the National Screening Unit (NSU), Ministry of Health. In September, the Ministry agreed to IANZ becoming the Lead Provider Auditor for both the National Cervical Screening Programme (NCSP) and BreastScreen Aotearoa (BSA).

Phil Barnes, Programme Manager Medical Testing and Radiology, IANZ, said these audits are in addition to the medical testing laboratory and radiology accreditation programmes. A new position has been established in the programme to help service the Ministry's requirements.

IANZ will develop, organise and undertake routine compliance audits for NCSP and BSA service providers. Those to be audited are: BSA lead providers, NCSP regional services and NCSP colposcopy services.

The National Cervical Screening Programme aims to reduce the incidence and mortality of cervical cancer by routinely screening an entire defined population at regular intervals. The twenty-one District Health Boards (DHB) are contracted to NSU to provide colposcopy services and thirteen DHB's have agreements to provide regional services for the NCSP. The scope of the audits are the NCSP Operational Policy and Quality Standards (where applicable) and the NSU Agreement.

The aim of BreastScreen Aotearoa is to reduce women's morbidity and mortality from breast cancer by identifying cancers at an early stage, allowing treatment to be commenced sooner than might otherwise have been possible. Currently there are six regional BSA lead providers of mammography and assessment services and two more will be formed next year. The scope of the audits is the BSA National Policy and Quality Standards and the agreement NSU has with the lead provider.

Phil Barnes said there is a three-year cycle for audits, with each BSA audits taking a week and NCSP audits two days to complete. Audit teams will comprise the IANZ lead auditor and a multidisciplinary team of technical experts. A NSU representative will also be involved.