

455 consecutive patients with operable breast cancer were screened for study eligibility

143 were excluded:
42 had an early disease relapse
44 did not have CTC assessed at any time
15 did not have CTC assessed during follow up years: 0-2
41 did not have CTC assessed during follow up years: 3-5
1 had advanced stage disease

312 patients were eligible

1st & 2nd year of FU

CK-19 mRNA⁻
(n=149)

CK-19 mRNA⁺
(n=163)

3rd - 5th year of FU

CK-19 mRNA⁻
(n=80)

CK-19 mRNA⁺
(n=69)

CK-19 mRNA⁻
(n=64)

CK-19 mRNA⁺
(n=99)

Persistently Negative Patients

Negative Turn to Positive Patients

Positive Turn to Negative Patients

Persistently Positive Patients