

# Breast cancer screening program should give higher importance to younger women

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Screening younger women for breast cancer is fairer and makes sound economic sense, according to new research by the University of East Anglia.

Published online today by the leading journal *Value in Health*, the study assessed the current screening guidelines in terms of both cost effectiveness and fairness.

The researchers concluded that extending the hotly-debated screening programme to [younger women](#) would have real benefits in terms of both economic efficiency and equity. The approach could also be used for other fatal diseases with similar age distributions.

"Screening only older women increases unfair disparities in terms of [life expectancy](#), quality of life and incidence of disease," said principal investigator Prof Louis Niessen, a public health economist at UEA's School of Medicine.

"Our findings show that extending [screening](#) to younger women will lead to a better mix of health programmes and a more balanced approach to the fight against [breast cancer](#)."

Prof Niessen urged policymakers and agencies such as NICE to use proper value-based weighing methods and take women's preferences into account when next reviewing breast cancer control guidelines.

**More information:** 'Incorporating equity-efficiency interactions in cost-effectiveness analysis - three approaches applied to breast cancer control' by S Baeten (Erasmus Medical Centre, Netherlands), R Baltussen (Radboud University, Netherlands), C Uyl-de Groot (Erasmus Medical Centre, Netherlands), J Bridges (Johns Hopkins University, US) and L Niessen (UEA, Johns Hopkins University and Erasmus Medical Centre) is published by *Value in Health* on April 2 2010.

Provided by University of East Anglia

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