

Whole body MRI is highly accurate in the early detection of breast cancer metastases

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Whole body magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) should be the imaging modality of choice for the detection of breast cancer metastases (when the cancer has spread beyond the breast) as it is highly accurate and can detect bone metastases while a patient is still asymptomatic (shows no symptoms), according to a study to be presented at the ARRS 2010 Annual Meeting in San Diego, CA.

Whole body MRI is a noninvasive medical test that helps physicians diagnose and treat [breast cancer](#). Breast cancer cells commonly spread to the bones, lungs, liver, or brain. Metastatic breast cancer tumors may be found before or at the same time as the primary tumor, or months and even years later.

"It is important that we detect metastases early in order to ensure the patient is getting the appropriate treatment. This study shows that whole body MRI can accomplish this task and is ready to be used for this indication," said Joshita Singh, MD, lead author of the study.

Besides MRI, other imaging modalities commonly used to detect breast cancer metastases include positron emission tomography - computed tomography (PET/CT), chest X-rays, bone scans, and ultrasound of the abdomen and pelvis.

The study, performed at Deenanath Mangeshkar Hospital and Research Center in Pune, India, included 99 patients with known breast cancer who were evaluated for metastases using whole body MRI. "Of the 99

patients, MRI accurately revealed that 47 patients were positive for metastases while 52 were negative. Of those patients who were positive for metastases, whole body MRI frequently detected [bone metastases](#) earlier when the patient was still asymptomatic," said Singh.

"As our study suggests, whole body MRI is an effective tool for the detection of metastases and unlike other procedures commonly used in this role, it emits no radiation. We highly recommend that whole body MRI be the imaging modality of choice for the detection of metastases in patients with breast cancer," she said.

Provided by American College of Radiology

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