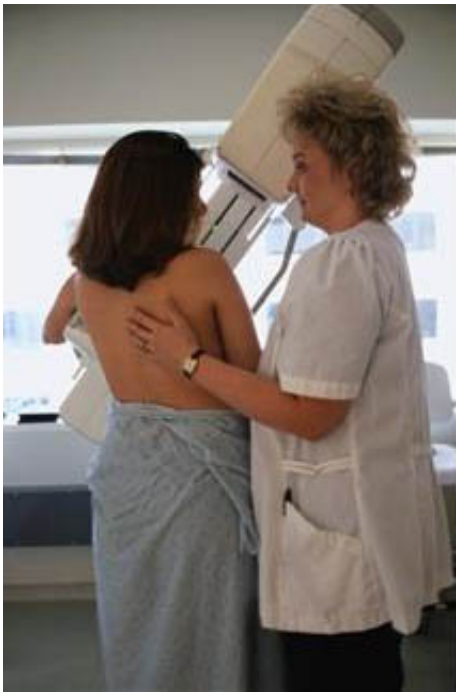
Medical Xpress

New breast cancer screening put to test

October 29 2010



Researchers are preparing to launch a £1.6M trial of a new imaging technology to see if might be better at screening breast cancer.

Researchers are preparing to launch a £1.6million trial of a new imaging technology to see if might be better at screening breast cancer.

Around 7,000 women in Aberdeen, Glasgow, Manchester, London and Guildford will be invited to take part in the three year study which will test a technique called digital breast tomosynthesis or DBT.

Current breast screening mammography takes 2D images of the breast but the new technique will allow clinicians to see a 3D image.

Professor Fiona Gilbert, Head of Imaging at the University of Aberdeen, is Chief Investigator of the study, funded by a grant from the National Institute of Health Research Health Technology Assessment Programme.

She said: “Standard mammography takes 2D images of the breast — one view from above and one from the side of the breast. But overlapping tissue within the breast can sometimes make it difficult to see breast cancers or sometimes makes normal tissue appear to be abnormal.

“If you can see the breast in 3D this will hopefully make cancers more visible. And if you have a better view of the breast, it might also reduce the number of women recalled for further tests due to false alarms.”

Women who are recalled after an abnormal screening mammogram will be invited to participate in the multi-centre trial which will start recruiting volunteers early next year.
Younger women with high or moderate risk of developing breast cancer because of their family history - and who are also attending annual screening — will also be asked to take part.

Trial participants will receive a standard mammogram as well as a DBT examination. The 2D and 3D images will be collected and reviewed independently by radiologists at another centre.

The research team will then compare the number of cancer cases detected by each imaging technique, the number of false positives (false alarms), and the relative effectiveness of DBT in women with dense tissue breasts which can be a cancer risk.

Dr. Maureen Gillan, Research Fellow at the University, added: “The

results of our study will be important for the UK NHS Breast Screening Program since it is now inviting women aged 47 to 73 for screening as well as younger women who are judged to be at risk of developing breast cancer due to their family history."

Women will be recruited from six NHS breast centres in Aberdeen, Glasgow, Manchester, London and Guildford.

October is breast cancer awareness month.

Provided by University of Aberdeen