

# Canadian breast cancer screening guidelines would cost thousands of lives

November 21 2011

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The American College of Radiology today denounced new breast cancer screening guidelines by the Canadian Task Force on Preventive Health (CTFOPH), which recommend against annual screening of women ages 40-49 and would extend time between screens for older women.

An ACR news release said "the CTFOPH guidelines ignore results of recent landmark randomized control trials which show that regular screening reduces breast cancer deaths in these women by approximately a third" and that "While implementation of the CTFOPH guidelines may save money on screening costs, the result will be thousands of unnecessary breast cancer deaths."

The ACR stated that the CTFOPH guidelines largely mirror those released by the United States Preventative Services Task Force (USPSTF) in 2009 and that "The USPSTF approach misses 75 percent of cancers in women 40-49 and up to a third of cancers in women 50-74."

The College pointed to an analysis (Hendrick and Helvie) published in the [American Journal of Roentgenology](#), showed that, if USPSTF recommendations were followed, 6,500 additional women each year in the U.S. would die from breast cancer. The ACR said "A similar proportion of Canadian women will likely die unnecessarily each year from [breast cancer](#) if the CTFOPH guidelines are followed."

Barbara Monsees, MD, chair of the American College of Radiology

[Breast Imaging](#) Commission, added that "Panels without profound expertise in [breast cancer screening](#) should not be issuing guidelines. These recommendations are derived from flawed analyses and they defy common sense. Women and providers who are looking for guidance are getting bad advice from both the U.S. and Canadian Task Forces."

**More information:** The ACR statement can be read at:  
[www.acr.org/SecondaryMainMenuContent/News/2011-11-Canadian-Breast-Cancer-Screening-Guidelines.aspx](http://www.acr.org/SecondaryMainMenuContent/News/2011-11-Canadian-Breast-Cancer-Screening-Guidelines.aspx)

Provided by American College of Radiology

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