ARRS: Women overestimate radiation risk from mammogram

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(HealthDay)—Women tend to overestimate the radiation risk associated with mammography, according to a study presented at the annual meeting of the American Roentgen Ray Society, held from May 4 to 9 in San Diego.

Jacqueline Hollada, from the University of California in Los Angeles, and colleagues surveyed 133 women presenting for annual mammography during a three-month period to ascertain their knowledge of the ionizing radiation associated with breast imaging. Participants were asked to rate the amount of radiation in a single mammogram relative to a series of radiation benchmarks. Five benchmarks were chosen to provide an approximately logarithmic scale with the value of a mammogram at the center (0.4 mSv). The benchmarks were ranked according to radiation, with 1 the highest and 6 the lowest.

The researchers found that none of the 78 women who responded to the benchmark question ranked all six radiation benchmarks correctly. Women overestimated the radiation associated with a mammogram compared with the other benchmarks. The correct rank for mammogram was 3.5, which was significantly different from the average rank given of 2.9 (standard deviation, 1.2; P

"Using everyday sources of radiation exposure as benchmarks can help add perspective and improve patients' understanding of radiation levels associated with mammography, thereby reducing anxiety related to the examination," Hollada said in a statement.

More information: Abstract
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