

Early mammography screening lowers risk of developing fatal breast cancer

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Three-dimensional culture of human breast cancer cells, with DNA stained blue and a protein in the cell surface membrane stained green. Image created in 2014 by Tom Misteli, Ph.D., and Karen Meaburn, Ph.D. at the NIH IRP.

An analysis of more than half a million women in Sweden reveals that mammography screening reduces the rates of advanced and fatal breast cancers. The findings are published early online in *Cancer*.

For the [analysis](#), László Tabár, MD, of Falun Central Hospital, Sweden, Stephen Duffy, MSc, of Queen Mary University of London, and their colleagues examined data on nearly one-third of the women in Sweden who were eligible for [mammography screening](#). Among these 549,091 women, the investigators calculated the rates of advanced breast cancers and cancers that were fatal within 10 years of diagnosis, comparing the findings in women who participated in recommended mammography screening and those who did not.

The team found a 41 percent reduction in cancers that were fatal within 10 years after diagnosis and a 25 percent reduction in the incidence of advanced [breast cancer](#) in women who participated in screening.

"This study shows that participation in breast cancer screening substantially reduces the risk of having a fatal breast cancer. Because the comparison of participating with non-participating persons was contemporaneous—with mammography screening and [breast cancer treatment](#) belonging to the same time period—it is not affected by potential changes in treatment of breast cancer over time," said Dr. Duffy.

Dr. Tabár stressed that participating in breast cancer screening confers a [reduced risk](#) of dying from breast cancer above and beyond what is obtainable with current therapies in the absence of screening. "Some may believe that recent improvements in breast cancer treatment makes early detection less important," he said. "Our study shows that nothing can replace finding breast cancer early."

More information: Duffy, László Tabár, Amy Ming-Fang Yen, Peter

B. Dean, Robert A. Smith, Håkan Jonsson, Sven Törnberg, Sam Li-Sheng Chen, Sherry Yueh-Hsia Chiu, Jean Ching-Yuan Fann, May Mei-Sheng Ku, Wendy Yi-Ying Wu, Chen-Yang Hsu, Yu-Ching Chen, Gunilla Svane, Edward Azavedo, Helene Grundström, Per Sundén, Karin Leifland, Ewa Frodis, Joakim Ramos, Birgitta Epstein, Anders Åkerlund, Ann Sundbom, Pál Bordás, Hans Wallin, Leena Starck, Annika Björkgren, Stina Carlson, Irma Fredriksson, Johan Ahlgren, Daniel Öhman, Lars Holmberg, Tony Hsiu-Hsi Chen. *CANCER*; Published Online: May 11, 2020.

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