

News study shows cryoblation 'freeze' treatment works for large breast tumors

March 20 2024, by Dennis Thompson and Carole Tanzer Miller



Killing off large tumors by freezing them could become an effective means of fighting difficult-to-treat [breast cancer](#), a new study says.

Only 10% of people who underwent the minimally invasive procedure, called cryoablation, had their cancer come back within 16 months, researchers said.

"For patients who have larger tumors but can't undergo surgery, this approach could be more effective than the current standard of care for patients who are not surgical candidates," researcher Dr. Yolanda Bryce, an interventional radiologist at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York City, said in a news release.

In the procedure, doctors use ultrasound or CT scans to locate tumors, and then an interventional radiologist inserts small, needle-like probes into the breast to create an ice ball that surrounds the [tumor](#).

The ice kills off the tumor, ridding patients of close to 100% of their [cancer cells](#) when combined with [hormone therapy](#) and radiation, researchers said.

If cancer recurs, the process can be repeated multiple times to keep the tumor at bay, the researchers added.

Cryoablation has been successfully used to treat breast tumors smaller than about a half-inch. This study shows it can be used against even larger tumors.

The study involved 60 patients who underwent cryoablation, because they couldn't go through surgery due to age, [heart problems](#), [high blood pressure](#) or ongoing chemotherapy.

Their tumor sizes ranged as large as 3.5 inches, with an average size of about an inch.

Cryoablation is performed under either local anesthesia or minimal

sedation. The freezing technique takes under a half-hour, and patients are able to go home the same day, researchers said.

"Surgery is still the best option for tumor removal, but there are thousands of women who, for various reasons, cannot have surgery," Bryce said. "We are optimistic that this can give more women hope on their treatment journeys."

Researchers will continue to follow these patients and collect data on the long-term effectiveness of the procedure, Bryce said.

Researchers are scheduled to present these findings at the [Society of Interventional Radiology's annual meeting](#) in Salt Lake City.

Findings presented at medical meetings should be considered preliminary until published in a peer-reviewed journal.

More information: The Cleveland Clinic has more on [cryoablation](#).

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