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Mammogram benefits seen as more important than harms

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(HealthDay)—Generally, women perceive the potential benefits of

mammograms as more important than the potential harms, according to a study published in the June issue of *Preventive Medicine*.

Xuanzi Qin, from the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, and colleagues surveyed a nationally representative sample of 557 U.S. women (aged 30 to 59 years) about their perceptions of harms and benefits as well as their attitudinal ambivalence toward mammograms.

The researchers found that respondents overall perceived the benefits as more important than harms. However, compared with respondents who were unaware, among those aware of recent recommendations, mammogram harms were perceived as more important. Compared with women who had not had a mammogram in the previous year, women who had a mammogram within one year perceived the harms as less important and the benefits as more important. Relatedly, women who perceived the harms as important were more ambivalent about screening than women who perceived harms as less important.

"If the public health goal is to prevent the population harms from overuse of mammograms (e.g., overdiagnosis, false positives), simply providing women with information about harms and benefits may not lead to this outcome, since women are likely to perceive the benefits as more important than harms, and thus make an informed choice to obtain screening," the authors write.

More information: Abstract/Full Text

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