Study Says Mammography Tied to Lower Risk of Breast Cancer Death

However, the jury is still out on whether such screening really does lower women's risk of death.

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A large Swedish study found that women who undergo mammography to detect signs of breast cancer are less likely to have advanced and fatal cases of the disease, Healio reports.

Publishing their findings in the journal Cancer, researchers analyzed data on nearly 550,000 women, amounting to about 30% of the Swedish population eligible for mammography.

During the study's observation period, there were 2,373 cases of breast cancer among the study population that proved fatal within 10 years of diagnosis, as well as 9,737 cases of advanced breast cancer.

There were 13 years of observation on average for women who developed cancer that was fatal within 10 years and 22 years of observation for women who were diagnosed with advanced disease.

The study authors found that receiving mammography screening was associated with a 41% lower risk of dying of breast cancer within 10 years of diagnosis and a 25% lower chance of being diagnosed with advanced breast cancer.

"Substantial reductions in the incidence rate of breast cancers that were fatal within 10 years after diagnosis and in the advanced breast cancer rate were found in this contemporaneous comparison of women participating versus those not participating in screening," the study authors concluded. "These benefits appeared to be independent of recent changes in treatment regimens."

This study adds to the body of evidence about mammograms and survival. However, the jury is still out on the matter, given that several other large studies have found such screening is associated with no survival benefit.

To read the study abstract, click here.

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