

Digital mammography plus digital breast tomosynthesis may decrease patient recall rates

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Nationally, about ten percent of women in the US are recalled for a second mammogram after an abnormality is detected on the first one—for most women this can be very stressful. However the use of digital breast tomosynthesis and full-field digital mammography combined may be associated with a substantial decrease in recall rate, according to a study performed at UPMC in Pittsburgh, PA. Some researchers believe that digital breast tomosynthesis depicts the breast tissue in a way which may allow radiologists to identify some tumors which could be missed with standard two-dimensional mammography.

The study included 125 patients that were evaluated using a combined method of digital breast tomosynthesis and standard digital mammography. "The use of digital breast tomosynthesis and full-field digital mammography (FFDM) was associated with a 30% reduction in recall rate for cancer-free examinations that would have led to recall if FFDM had been used alone," said Jules H. Sumkin, MD, one of the authors of the study.

"Patient recalls are problematic at multiple levels. Patients pay an emotional price and it is a sheer inconvenience having to go back for a second appointment. It is also problematic for imaging facilities because they are faced with the high cost of resources required for the recalls," he said.

"We are confident that recall rates could be decreased by adding breast tomosynthesis to FFDM," said Dr. Sumkin. Digital breast tomosynthesis is not yet FDA approved.

This study appears in the August issue of the *American Journal of Roentgenology*.

Source: American Roentgen Ray Society

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