

# NHS Breast Screening Programme still effective in reducing deaths in England

23 November 2020

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An England-wide case-control study led by Queen Mary University of London has shown that, despite major improvements in diagnostic techniques and treatments, mammography screening continues to play an important role in lowering the risk of dying from breast cancer.

The study of over 23,000 women showed a 37% reduction in [breast cancer](#) mortality for women screened at least once, corresponding to approximately nine breast cancer deaths prevented between ages 55 and 79 for every 1000 women attending screening at ages 50-69. The effect of screening within the NHS Breast Screening Programme in England is stronger and longer lasting in women aged 65 or over, but it remains highly relevant for [younger women](#).

Corresponding author Professor Stephen Duffy from Queen Mary University of London said: "The NHS Breast Screening Programme is doing its job in reducing the risk of death from breast cancer. Our results indicate that the benefit persists for 3-4 years in women aged under 65, so slippage of the three-year interval would be unsafe for these women.

"In the current Covid crisis, efforts to reinstate the breast screening programme should continue apace. If [difficult decisions](#) about delivery of the programme have to be made in the future, it may be appropriate to consider different intervals between screens for different age groups."

**More information:** Roberta Maroni, Nathalie J Massat, Dharmishta Parmar, Amanda Dibden, Jack Cuzick, Peter D Sasieni, Stephen W Duffy. A case-control study to evaluate the impact of the breast screening programme on mortality in England. *Br J Cancer* 2020.

Provided by Queen Mary, University of London

APA citation: NHS Breast Screening Programme still effective in reducing deaths in England (2020, November 23) retrieved 11 June 2022 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-11-nhs-breast-screening-programme-effective.html>

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