

Family Medicine Clerkship Plain Language Summary

Title: Screening for breast cancer does not help save lives from breast cancer in 40-49 year old women

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Plain Language Summary:

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) is a group of doctors and experts. They tell doctors the best way to look for and treat different illnesses. They just found that looking for breast cancer with mammography (taking a picture of the breast with an x-ray to look for cancer) should not be started until 50 years old. This change happened because of a recent study. They found that looking for breast cancer in women aged 40-49 didn't save any extra lives from breast cancer. The change will help women avoid 10 years of money spent on mammograms. Women will also be able to avoid 10 years of radiation. Doctors should still check for cancer in women who have a higher chance of having it. Women who have had a mother or sister with breast cancer have a higher chance of having breast cancer.

Additional Resources:

US Preventive Services Task Force: www.ahrq.gov/Clinic/uspstfix.htm

Mayo Clinic: <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/mammogram-guidelines/AN02052>

American Cancer Society:

<http://www.cancer.org/Healthy/FindCancerEarly/CancerScreeningGuidelines/american-cancer-society-guidelines-for-the-early-detection-of-cancer>

Key Words:

Screening, mammograms, breast cancer

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