
Mammogram Rate for 40-49 Year Olds in the U.S. Shows No Decline

More than three years after the United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommended against routine mammogram screening for women between the ages of 40 and 49, a study from Brigham and Women's Hospital (BWH) finds that mammogram rates in the United States have not declined in that age group, or any other. The study results are published in the April 19, 2013 online edition of the journal *Cancer*.

"If the USPSTF recommendations had been widely adopted, we would have expected to see a significant decline in mammography rates among women in their forties," said the study's lead author, Lydia Pace, MD, MPH, a global women's health fellow in the Division of Women's Health at BWH. "However, this study demonstrates that younger women are continuing to get mammograms."

Researchers analysed data from nearly 28,000 women who were asked about their mammography use during the 2005, 2008 and 2011 National Health Interview Survey. They found that among all women, mammography rates rose at a slight but statistically non-significant rate between 2008 and 2011 from 51.9 percent to 53.6 percent. Among women in the 40 to 49 age group, mammography rates also rose at a slight but statistically non-significant rate between 2008 and 2011 from 46.1 percent to 47.5 percent.

"Our research does not explain the reasons why mammography rates did not decline, but it is worth noting that several prominent professional and advocacy organizations continue to recommend mammography screening for women between the ages of 40 and 49," said Dr. Pace. "Providers may disagree with the USPSTF recommendations or they may not have the time or the tools needed for discussions with patients about the relative benefits and harms of mammography. Patients may also disagree with the recommendations and may still be requesting annual mammograms or self-referring to mammography facilities."

Reference:

[Trends in mammography screening rates after publication of the 2009 US Preventive Services Task Force recommendations.](#)

Lydia E. Pace MD, Yulei He, Nancy L. Keating. Article first published online: 19 April 2013. *Cancer*.
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