

SOUTHWESTERN NEWS

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STUDY TO COMPARE SCREENING TESTS FOR BREAST CANCER

DALLAS - June 10, 1996 - A new study at UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas will compare mammography -- a proven lifesaver -- with other types of imaging technology to determine the best screening for women at high risk for breast cancer.

"Mammography is very good, but like any other test, it is not perfect," said Dr. John Coscia, assistant professor of radiology, holder of the Robert B. and Virginia Payne Professorship in Oncology and the study's principle investigator. "Other imaging techniques may have potential, either alone or in addition to mammography."

Early detection is the best way to reduce mortality from breast cancer, which is diagnosed about 182,000 times a year in the United States and kills about 46,000 women and 240 men.

The UT Southwestern pilot study is designed to determine whether one test or a combination of tests is the most valuable detection tool for women who are at high risk because of a family or personal history of breast cancer.

For five years women in the study will undergo an annual mammogram and three other tests: ultrasound, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and nuclear medicine, which requires injection of a radioactive agent. If one of the tests reveals a finding that is suspicious, a biopsy will be conducted for a definitive diagnosis.

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"Mammography is the only one of these tests that has been proven to reduce breast-cancer mortality," Coscia said. "But mammography occasionally detects abnormalities that aren't cancer, which causes unnecessary follow-up exams and worry, and it doesn't pick up all cancers."

Other researchers involved in the study are Dr. Bill Erdman, assistant professor of radiology; Dr. Paul Weatherall, associate professor of radiology; and Dr. Gail Tomlinson, assistant professor of pediatrics and head of UT Southwestern's Family Cancer Registry.

Women with a strong family history or personal history of breast cancer who are interested in participating in the study may call 648-9262. Participants must be age 25 to 40 and must be asymptomatic for breast cancer.

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