

Radiologists Note Advances In Digital Mammography.

The Dallas Morning News (10/6, Cook) reported that "the most important breakthroughs" in breast cancer screening "have been in digital mammography and computer-aided detection (CAD)," according to Dr. Doug Hammons, a radiologist at Methodist Mansfield Medical Center. While "digital mammograms produce sharper images than traditional film-based methods," they also require less radiation and are "easy to store and manipulate on a computer," Dr. Timothy J. Georgelas, a breast radiologist at Methodist Richardson Medical, explained. But, Georgelas added that "the accuracy of digital vs. traditional mammography is still up for debate," as "many doctors...say there isn't enough research or evidence yet to tell" whether the technology reduces false positives. But, "for all the changes and advances, doctors still stress the importance of regular self-exams and encourage women to get a baseline mammogram at 35 and annual mammograms after 40."

Many Breast Cancer Deaths May Occur In Women Who Never Receive Mammograms. Reuters (10/7, Fox) reports that, according to research to be presented at a meeting of the American Society of Clinical Oncology, women who regularly undergo mammograms are far less likely to die of breast cancer than those who were never screened. Researchers said that in a study of 6,997 breast cancer patients, 25 percent who died had received more than one mammogram. Meanwhile, 75 percent who died had never been screened, or else were diagnosed after their first mammogram.

WebMD (10/6, Laino) reported, "The researchers then extrapolated the results to the more than 192,000 women who will be diagnosed with invasive breast cancer in the US in 2009." They estimated that "overall, 15 percent of these women will die over the next 13 years," but "only five percent of those who were regularly screened are expected to die by 2022," compared to "56 percent of those who skipped regular mammograms."