

Researchers clash over AAA screening's worth

Two European studies published on the same day have reached opposite conclusions about the cost-effectiveness of ultrasound screening exams for abdominal aortic aneurysm.

Researchers in the U.K. came to a positive conclusion about the exam's cost-effectiveness based on nearly 70,000 subjects enrolled in the Multicenter Aneurysm Screening Study (MASS). A cost/benefit analysis showed average per-life-year gains below the National Health Service's benchmark of £25,000. Danish investigators, on the other hand, reported negative findings using a mathematical model and data from the literature and the Danish Vascular Registry to estimate costs and outcomes for a hypothetical population of Danish men aged 65 from screening to death. Their estimates showed the cost of screening per quality adjusted life year was \$71,160, well beyond the local accepted benchmark of \$49,530. Both studies were published online June 26 in the British Medical Journal.