

Inside Story HIGHLIGHTS

From the Pacific Radiology Referrer Newsletter



Pacific Radiology



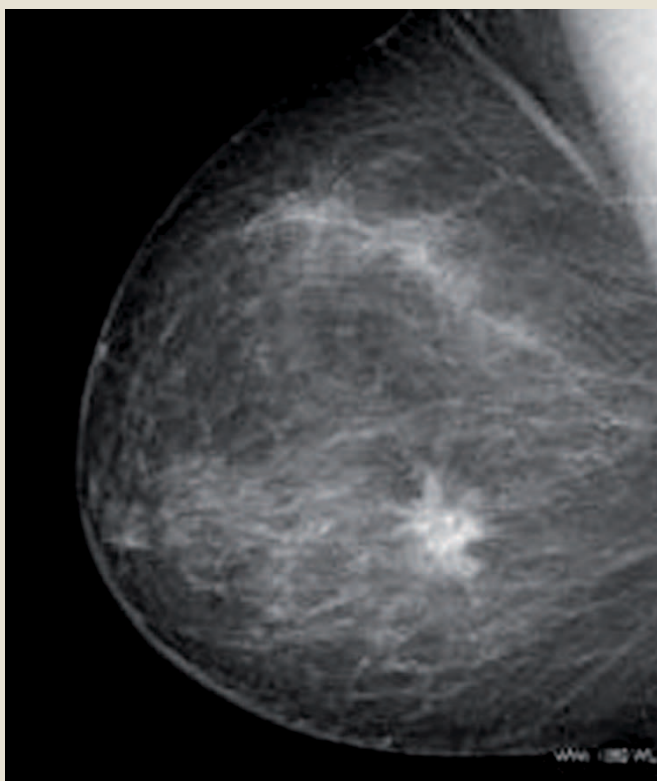
Mammography Guidelines

We get a lot of women presenting for breast imaging who do not fit into our guidelines; this leads to confusion as to what the best test for them is and can cause a delay in diagnosis as a result.

Below are the major guidelines for breast imaging:

SCREENING

Asymptomatic women. Doctors referral not needed but we insist that they have a GP who will look after them if a problem is found. Most do have referrals, as many of you have excellent screening databases. Generally this will exclude the 45-70 year olds who are eligible for the breast screen programme, but we are happy to perform this service if there is patient preference. Please note that routine screening should not be performed in women under 40, unless there are unique circumstances. There is some debate as to the frequency of screening for women aged 40-50. We apply the internationally agreed guidelines of yearly mammograms for this age group, and two yearly for the over 50s.



Breast cancer on a mammogram



James Wellwood

DIAGNOSTIC

These are women with specific clinical problems (palpable change, discharge, nipple/skin changes). All will need a doctor's referral. Under age 30 we will only perform ultrasound, if this cannot make the diagnosis we will usually recommend surgical review (this is uncommon). Between 30 and 35 we will perform ultrasound – if we find a simple cyst we can stop. Over 35 we will perform mammography and ultrasound. The use of these two techniques is the minimum standard in working up breast problems; this is based on international experience in missed cancer diagnoses. It is important you indicate mammography **and** ultrasound on the referral if you are accessing the Community Radiology schemes, as it is possible the funder may insist on a second referral before ultrasound can be performed (this can delay diagnosis).

IN SUMMARY

Screening – Asymptomatic

- > Over 40 only
- > Yearly 40-50, 2 yearly over 50

Diagnostic – Lump, discharge, nipple/skin changes

- > Under 30 ultrasound only
- > 30-35 ultrasound first, mammography if needed
- > Over 35 ultrasound and mammography

Please call and ask to speak to a radiologist if you have any ongoing concerns or questions.

~ James Wellwood