

Breast Cancer News



Early Detection Means Less Toxic Treatment Ⓜ

(NAPSA)—Women who have breast cancer detected by mammography are about half as likely to have toxic treatments as those who have cancer detected by physical examination—regardless of their age, a new study shows.

Overall, patients whose cancer was detected at physical examination were three times more likely to be treated with chemotherapy than those who had their cancer detected by screening mammography, said the lead author of the study, Richard J. Barth, Jr., MD, Chief of the Division of Surgical Oncology at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center.

Chemotherapy is commonly recommended for patients with tumors larger than a centimeter in diameter or with cancer that has spread into the lymph nodes, Dr. Barth explained. Cancers detected by mammography were half as large as those detected by physical exam. In addition, only 16 percent of those patients whose tumors were detected by mam-

mography had cancer spread to the lymph nodes compared with 42 percent of those who had their breast cancer detected on physical examination, he said.

Overall, patients who had their breast cancer detected on physical examination were more than twice as likely to be treated with mastectomy rather than breast conservation, he added.

While there continues to be debate on whether screening mammography increases survival of women ages 40 to 49 and 70 and older, there is no doubt that mammography detects cancer earlier, Dr. Barth said. The study provides strong supporting evidence that women over 40 should be screened with mammography, he said in the January 2005 issue of the “American Journal of Roentgenology.” The journal is published by the American Roentgen Ray Society, the oldest radiology society in the U.S.

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