



AUG 12 2011

Oregon

Aug-11-2011 15:04 

Benefits and Harms to Getting a Mammogram Before Age 40, MU Researcher Says

Salem-News.com

The goal of the study is not to encourage women to avoid mammograms, but to discover more effective ways to educate women on the benefits and risks of breast cancer screenings as well as to improve communication between doctors and patients.

(COLUMBIA, Mo.) - Due to changing guidelines concerning when and how often they should first be screened for breast cancer with mammograms, many women are confused.

The American Cancer Society recommends women 40 years and older get a mammogram every year, but the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommends mammograms every other year for women older than 50. **A University of Missouri researcher says doctors and patients should communicate better about individual patients' timing of breast cancer screenings.**

Julie Kapp, assistant professor in the Department of Family and Community Medicine, is working on a pilot study to improve communication about mammograms between patients and healthcare providers.

"The science related to breast cancer and mammography screening is continually evolving," Julie Kapp, assistant professor in the Department of Family and Community Medicine in MU's School of Medicine, said. "Conflicting guidelines across organizations suggest there is still a lot of work to be done to send consistent messages to women and health care professionals to ensure quality care."

Although the current guidelines suggest varying ages at which women should get mammograms, recommendations in previous years have ranged from age 35 to age 50 for initial screenings. Kapp says women younger than 50 should talk with their physicians to customize the age at which they begin mammography screenings. Decisions should be based on women's preference, risk factors and understanding of the benefits and harms of mammograms. Women should also

be aware that total health, including diet and exercise, is important for breast health and to reduce the risk of other diseases.

“Women who get mammograms before age 40 are more likely to be subjected to the harms of mammograms that many people don’t consider,” Kapp said. “The tests are not as accurate in younger women, so they can produce false positive results. That means time spent worrying about whether they have cancer, unnecessary biopsies and additional radiation exposure.”

In a pilot study, Kapp is working to understand women’s knowledge about mammography and their feelings surrounding breast cancer screening conversations with their physicians. Kapp aims to help women understand the advantages and disadvantages of mammograms and help improve the dialogue between patients and health care providers about the best time to begin breast cancer screenings.

The goal of the study is not to encourage women to avoid mammograms, but to discover more effective ways to educate women on the benefits and risks of breast cancer screenings as well as to improve communication between doctors and patients.

“Most of the information women get about mammograms does not come from their physicians; it comes from friends, family and the Internet,” Kapp said. “Women and doctors should have frequent conversations about their overall health and breast cancer screenings.”

The pilot study is funded by the MU Research Council. Kapp has an adjunct appointment with the MU Master of Public Health Program.

Missourinet

4 H LIFE program gets grant to expand (AUDIO)

by Allison Blood on August 11, 2011

in [Crime & Courts](#), [Human Interest](#)

A University of Missouri Extension program aimed at helping children with incarcerated parents received a grant to spread their efforts around the state and to four other states.

4 H LIFE is a program that aims to improve the relationship between children and their incarcerated parents. Lead Advisor Lynna Lawson says the program got nearly 280 thousand dollars to help spread their decade-old program. The program arranges visits between children and their incarcerated parents. During the visits there are educational activities, socializing and exercises to help increase communication between the parents and children.

About 80 thousand will stay in Missouri to strengthen programs here, while the other part will go toward starting programs in Alabama, New Hampshire, Washington D.C. and Louisiana.

The program operates out of four different correctional facilities, and there are about 175 participants in the program at any given time. Lawson says the programs are aimed at teaching the children of inmates how to not make the same choices their parents did. It also aims at improving communication between the parent and child, because about 96 percent of inmates will return home. She says having a strong relationship once the parent comes home makes a big difference in the family dynamic.