



News Release

The Canadian Association of Radiologists supports breast cancer screening for women in their 40s

New task force guidelines don't match CAR guidelines for screening

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OTTAWA, ON (November 22, 2011) – The Canadian Association of Radiologists (CAR) guidelines for breast screening, updated in 2011, support screening Canadian women aged 40 to 49 for breast cancer, the organization said today in response to new screening guidelines released by the Canadian Task Force on Preventive Health Care.

Dr. Jamie Fraser, President of the CAR, says that “organized, high quality screening is an important public health initiative supported by the CAR. The CAR brings together experts in diagnostic imaging to create national CAR guidelines based on a review of the scientific literature and in consideration of the rapidly changing technological environment in which radiology is practiced.”

Dr. Nancy Wadden, chair of the CAR’s Mammography Accreditation Program (MAP) and a practicing radiologist in Newfoundland says, “We use digital technology which has been shown to increase the accuracy of breast cancer detection in younger women in premenopausal, perimenopausal and postmenopausal women, which the task force recommends be excluded from screening. In NL, 18 per cent of all breast cancers are diagnosed in women under the age of 50. Premenopausal cancers tend to be more aggressive and faster growing than postmenopausal cancers. Therefore, it has been shown that if women ages 40 to 49 are to be screened, they should be screened annually.”

In response to the task force’s recommendation that women 50 to 74 return for screening in 2 to 3 years, Dr. Wadden also states, “There is published data from screening trials that have shown that when the screening interval is longer than 24 months, there is an increase in interval cancers. Interval cancers are cancers that occur between screening exams and usually present as larger palpable cancers.” The CAR recommends screening at one to two year intervals.

Dr. Shiela Appavoo, chair of the CAR working group currently developing full CAR Breast Imaging practice standards and guidelines to be released in early 2012, adds, “The current revision of the CAR guidelines has been based on modern evidence and recommends annual screening of women aged 40 to 49 and annual or

biennial screening of women aged 50 to 74. This recommendation is consistent with guidelines followed by other North American medical organizations with expertise in breast cancer care such as the American College of Radiology, the American Cancer Society, and the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and will not change based on the recent Canadian Taskforce document.”

“The CAR will continue to focus our efforts on supporting high quality screening and the best possible level of care for Canadians,” concludes Dr. Fraser.

Dr. Jamie Fraser, CAR President

Dr. Nancy Wadden, Chair, CAR Mammography Accreditation Program Working Group

Dr. Shiela Appavoo, Chair, CAR Breast Imaging Standards and Practice Guidelines Working Group

Dr. Pavel Crystal, Chair, CAR Breast Disease Referral Guidelines Working Group

About the CAR

The CAR is the national voice of radiology committed to promoting the highest standards in patient-centered imaging, lifelong learning and research. Our physician members are respected as the experts in using diagnostic and therapeutic interventional imaging technology to promote safe, efficient and quality health care for Canadians. Radiologists are integral members of the healthcare team.

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To coordinate an interview with a spokesperson from the CAR, contact:

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Backgrounder

The Canadian Association of Radiologists (CAR) is the national specialty society for radiologists in Canada. It is dedicated to maintaining the highest standards of care, promoting patient safety and helping radiologists contribute to the very best health care for patients.

The CAR is particularly active on three fronts:

- ♦ working with governments, health professionals and technology leaders to make optimal use of diagnostic imaging (DI) to ensure the right tests are performed the right way and interpreted the right way
- ♦ serving as the voice of Canadian radiology so that governments, the public and the media are fully informed about the benefits and risks of DI, the challenges faced and the solutions proposed
- ♦ creating, accrediting and promoting opportunities for continuing medical education and research, to help radiologists stay at the leading edge of DI health care

Best Practices in Radiology

The CAR is committed to providing solutions in providing quality diagnostic imaging services to Canadians.

Initiatives of the CAR address critical healthcare concerns:

- ♦ to ensure *quality patient care* through the use of referral guidelines for DI services
- ♦ to make the *best use of DI equipment* through appropriate use of current and new technology
- ♦ to significantly *reduce wait times* for DI by ensuring the appropriate use of equipment
- ♦ to *promote patient safety* through radiation awareness and the provision of the best test for patient needs

Mammography Accreditation Program

The CAR Mammography Accreditation Program (MAP) is an initiative instituted over fifteen years ago to ensure that the quality of mammography images meets the highest standards. This voluntary program offers radiologists the opportunity for peer review and evaluation of their facility's staff qualifications, equipment performance, quality control and quality assurance programs, image quality, breast dose, and processor quality control.

The impetus for the program came as a result of the concerns of radiologists, other national medical organizations, and the public, that only qualified personnel perform and interpret mammograms and that dedicated mammography equipment remains optimally operational to ensure that women receive mammography examinations with the lowest possible dose and risk. Equipment calibration, performance, quality control activities, continuing technologist and radiologist education are all evaluated.

Today, nearly 450 facilities enjoy the benefits of being accredited through the CAR, and this number continues to grow. Facilities successfully completing all the CAR requirements will be granted accreditation for a three year period and will be listed on the CAR website at <http://www.car.ca/en/accreditation/accredited-centres.aspx>.