

# ABSTRACT

## Mammography as a screening test for breast cancer - a private practitioner's experience and its implications for Jamaica

Olivia Patricia McDonald

A study was conducted to assess whether there was any association between participation in screening for breast cancer and the presence of risk factors, during the months of January and February 1991.

The study was aimed at obtaining baseline data on reasons for screening among women in Jamaica, which may assist in the formulation of national recommendations for breast cancer screening in Jamaica.

Breast cancer screening is currently provided on a regular basis by private sector radiological services in Jamaica.

There are no breast examination services where clients may be seen at no cost. At the Jamaica Cancer Society which is the most low cost service, only the low income clients can expect to have a mammogram if they can satisfy the interviewer, and even then, although the service costs less, the service offered is not as comprehensive as in the private sector.

The study showed that several women are using the service. For those women whose records indicate that the request for service was not diagnostic, most of them met the criteria for screening in that there were associated risk factors.

An examination of costs incurred for screening and follow-up care indicates that the present resources allocated to the public sector health care services does not lend itself to a national screening service by mammography.

In the short term, screening will have to target women 50 to 64 years of age, using primarily self breast examination, supported by mammography where the individual client can afford the cost.

The study also identified that a data collection needs to be implemented on women screened as positive, as well as the number of women with diagnoses of breast cancer who have not died.