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## *LATEST ONCOLOGY UPDATES*

### **Title:**

MRI Evaluation of the Contralateral Breast in Women with Recently Diagnosed Breast Cancer

### **Background:**

Incidence of contralateral breast cancer remains high despite clinical exams and mammography in patients who have been treated for unilateral breast cancer.

### **Study Question**

Evaluated the benefit of MRI of contralateral breast in addition to clinical breast exam and mammography soon after diagnosis of unilateral breast cancer.

### **Study Population**

969 women who had a recent diagnosis of unilateral breast cancer.

### **Study Design**

Women with a recent diagnosis of breast cancer underwent a dynamic contrast enhanced MRI within 60 days of their initial breast cancer diagnosis.

### **Study Results**

135 of the 969 women (13.9%) of women underwent a biopsy based on MRI findings. 33 tumors were diagnosed in these 969 women within the first year after diagnosis. Of these, 30 were diagnosed based on MRI findings. 12 (40%) of these tumors were DCIS while 18 (60%) were invasive. The average invasive cancer measured 10.9 mm in diameter. 27 of the 30 patients had lymph node assessment and none of these had lymph node involvement.

### **Authors conclusion**

‘MRI can detect cancer in the contralateral breast that is missed by mammography and clinical exam at the time of the initial breast cancer diagnosis.’

### **Study Commentary**

- This was a pivotal study evaluating the role of MRIs in addition to clinical examination and mammography.
- The study was limited to assessment just (within 60 days) of initial diagnosis of breast cancer. Also follow up was limited to the first year.
- The authors commented on that as the cancers which were detected at an earlier stage this can improve the prognosis. We do not have any survival data from this



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- study. Clearly in order to truly evaluate the effectiveness of MRI in comparison to mammogram and clinical exam we need to evaluate if the use of MRI impacts survival.
- About 13% of patients underwent a biopsy based on MRI findings – that is still a large number of patients given the rarity of cancer diagnosis in this population at that time.
- There was no cost-effectiveness analysis presented.

### **Bottom line for Canadian Oncologists**

MRI has been shown to be useful in addition to mammogram and clinical examination in assessment of contralateral breast cancer. It is important to note that by no means this study evaluated if MRI is superior to mammogram as a surveillance tool, this was a one time evaluation and we need long – term follow up and prospective studies to evaluate the role of this imaging technique in addition to mammogram. Also we don't have any survival data from this study. The use of the endpoint of survival for imaging studies is controversial, but in today's clinical reality and in the setting of limited resources, it is important that we evaluate for survival and cost-effectiveness when we perform practice-influencing trials.