

Linda Patrick Miller

The Impact of a Relatives Mammogram: "A Teachable Moment"

Breast cancer is the second most common cancer in women in this country. It was estimated that in 1999, 176,300 women would develop breast cancer, and approximately 43,300 women would die of breast cancer. New Jersey has one of the highest rates of breast cancer occurrence and the second highest rate of death from breast cancer in the United States. Having regular screening mammograms can reduce breast the number of women who die from breast cancer by 25-30%. Thus, the American Cancer Society recommends that women age forty or older have a mammogram each year. In New Jersey, however, only 58.6% of women that age have had a screening mammogram in the last year.

Some reasons women don't have mammograms are well known. Women who don't have access to health care, and women whose health care provider doesn't recommend that they get a mammogram are less likely than other women to get mammograms. However, only 66% of women who don't have these barriers get regular mammograms. Therefore, if we want to increase the number of women who have mammograms each year, it is important to look for others barriers, for example how women think and feel about breast cancer and breast cancer screening, and to find new ways to help women overcome those barriers.

Having a relative develop breast cancer can change the way a woman thinks and feels about breast cancer and breast cancer screening. Having a mammogram may also change a woman's thoughts and feeling about breast cancer and breast cancer screening. Studying how women's thoughts and feelings about breast cancer and breast cancer screening change when they have a mammogram, or when someone close to them has a mammogram, will help us understand how those thoughts and feelings can effect their performance of breast cancer screening procedures. This study will examine the effect of having a mammogram on women who have a mammogram, and their mothers, sisters and daughters. Understanding those effects will help us design programs to help women help each other to ensure that more women in New Jersey get screening mammograms each year.