Mammographic screening: Is it relevant to developing countries?

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In the First world Mammogram screening for breast cancer is well established, its value, however, continues to be questionable. Multiple recent studies have shown that mammogram screening programs lead to increased costs and unnecessary further testing with no benefit to the patient. In developing countries clinical breast examination can be equally useful and more cost effective than mammograms, as shown by Mittra in 1995. Breast cancer presents at a later stage and in the pre-menopausal age group in the developing world. The unreliability of this modality as a screening tool is well recognized in this population thus further questioning its suitability. In many third world countries mammograms are costly and unavailable to the general population thus hindering screening. The different characteristics of breast cancer presentation in the third world coupled with cost and availability issues suggest that mammographic screening may not be beneficial in developing countries. Financial resources may be better directed to managing other aspects of the disease.

Biography
Shivraj Bahadur Singh is currently working on new technologies to reduce the cancer risk associated with the x-ray dose for pediatric CT and Mammographic Screening. He is currently working at University of the West Indies which is based at Trinidad and Tobago.

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