

Study: Get mammograms based on menopause status, not age

By Claudia Buck, Sacramento Bee

For years, women were advised to get their annual mammogram starting at age 40, an effort to detect breast cancer before it turned deadly. But that guideline became contentious with the medical community divided on what age – and how often – women should get their breast checks done. Some recommended that women over age 50 scale back to once-every-two-year mammograms.

Tuesday, a new UC Davis study says women should get annual mammograms based on their menopausal status, not their age. Its research is folded into new American Cancer Society breast cancer screening guidelines, expected to be released today. Previously, the society recommended yearly mammograms for all women over age 40.

“We found menopausal status was a much better predictor of who benefits from screenings,” said Diana Miglioretti, a biostatistics professor with the UC Davis Department of Public Health Sciences, who conducted the research project, which looked at mammogram results from more than 15,000 U.S. women.

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