

MRI for Breast Cancer Screening

Albert B. Lowenfels, MD

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MRI for Breast Cancer Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment

Morrow M, Waters J, Morris E

Lancet. 2011;378:1804-1811

Summary

How helpful is MRI in the diagnosis and management of women with breast cancer? The authors attempted to answer this question on the basis of their review of 1837 published reports, including several randomized trials. They suggest that this diagnostic procedure is helpful for patients who meet certain criteria, such as women with known breast cancer mutations or who have a high risk for breast cancer and women with a positive axillary node but no detectable source in the breast. One advantage of MRI is that it can detect tumors even in women with dense breast tissue. Whether MRI improves survival in patients with breast cancer is uncertain.

Viewpoint

Screening mammography is widely used and has contributed to the decreasing mortality from breast cancer. The question of when MRI, a more costly procedure, should be used as a supplemental or replacement screening procedure is still unsettled. It seems unlikely that MRI will reduce the risk for ipsilateral breast tumor recurrence, and it is unclear whether MRI improves overall patient survival. Its best use to date appears to be for earlier detection of tumors in high-risk patients.

[Abstract](#)