

Early detection of breast cancer

by mammography screening

The numbers below refer to women aged 50 years and older* who either did or did not participate in mammography screening for approximately 11 years.

	1,000 women who did not participate in mammography screening	1,000 women who participated in mammography screening
Benefits		
How many women died from breast cancer?	5	4
How many women died of any type of cancer?	22	22
Harms		
How many women experienced false alarms and unnecessarily had additional testing or tissue removed (biopsy)?	-	100
How many women with non-progressive breast cancer unnecessarily had partial or complete removal of a breast?	-	5

*A few of the studies looked at women aged 40 years and older; these data are also included.

Short summary: Mammography screening reduced the number of women who died from breast cancer by 1 out of every 1,000 women. However, it had no effect on the number of women who died of any type of cancer. Among all women taking part in screening, some women with non-progressive cancer were overdiagnosed and received unnecessary treatment.

Source: [1] Gøtzsche & Jørgensen. Cochrane Database Syst Rev 2013(6):CD001877.

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<https://www.hardingcenter.de/en/fact-boxes>