

Breastscreen is best says Cancer Institute

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The chief executive of the New South Wales Cancer Institute has echoed the concerns of North Coast doctors about an alternative breast screening service.

Safe Breast Imaging is being offered at local beauty clinics and is being touted as an alternative to the mammogram.

Eight north coast doctors have expressed concern about the practise, which they say has never been proven to detect breast cancer.

Professor David Currow agrees, and says women should not take chances on a matter of life and death.

"Screening mammography offered by Breastscreen Australia is the only technology that has been demonstrated to actually reduce mortality," Prof Currow said.

"We are talking about life and death here and we have current Australian data that says we've reduced mortality from breast cancer by more than 25 percent because of breast screening with digital mammography," he said.

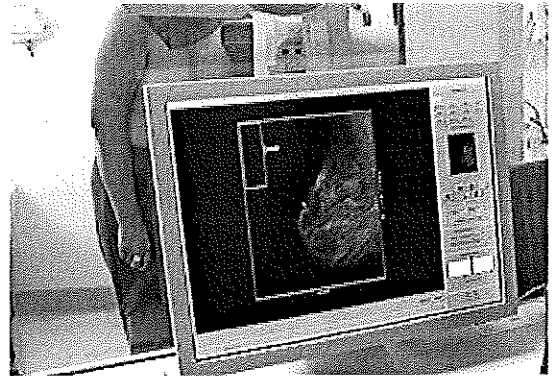
"I'd really encourage women to use Breastscreen because it is the only program that has been shown to reduce mortality, and there are lots of people out there making lots of claims but at the end of the day the important issue is if you're between 50 and 69, having a mammogram at Breastscreen every two years is going to help reduce mortality from breast cancer," Prof Currow said.

Jo Firth from Safe Breast Imaging has told the ABC she would welcome comparative analysis of the electrical impedance scanner, but she can't find a clinical institute that is willing to do the trials.

She says she always refers clients to their GP if her scans reveal anything that could be of concern.

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A woman undergoes a mammogram at the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, Melbourne, using newly installed digital technology enabling doctors and cancer specialists to view the images immediately, October 2004. (AAP: Julian Smith, file photo)

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