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New breast screening method to save thousands of women from cancer “Rapid Breast MRI” enables women with dense breast tissue to get routine MRI screenings

Flint, Michigan – February 2017 — A new method for screening women with dense breast tissue may potentially save thousands of lives by detecting breast cancer four to six years earlier than mammographic technology. The original research by [Dr. David A. Strahle](#), chairman of [Regional Medical Imaging](#) (RMI) in Flint, is unlike any other addressing this subject with international implications for half the female population.

Mammograms are the current standard for breast screening. Due to its costs, imaging with magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) is used only for women at high risk for cancer (2% of the population).

Dr. Strahle’s [“Rapid Breast MRI” protocol](#) cuts scan time by 70 percent to only 7 minutes, significantly reducing costs and enabling its use to screen women with dense breasts. In conjunction with a local HMO, Dr. Strahle found that early detection creates major savings for both women and insurance companies when considering 10 categories of expense related to breast cancer.

Mammographic technology for [women with dense breast tissue](#) is simply not as effective as MRI in spotting cancer, Dr. Strahle noted. In addition, unlike tomosynthesis (3D mammography) or mammograms, MRIs do not use radiation (x-rays).

“Mammograms are like trying to see a thunderstorm through clouds without radar,” Strahle said, whose extensive background includes aviation and medicine. “MRI sees through dense tissue, allowing radiologists to spot virtually all suspicious tumors.”

Other takeaways:

- The protocol allows **MRI screening** on a **regular** basis of women with dense breast tissue.
- Research was conducted with **671 women** over **seven years**. The peer-reviewed paper was published **Jan. 30, 2017**.
- The research includes an easier method for interpreting MRI examinations, lowering the false positive rate below any other breast screening method.

Although insurance providers do not yet cover Rapid Breast MRI, the exam costs \$395 out-of-pocket at RMI compared with a diagnostic MRI that runs \$700 or more. In addition to reducing scan time, the screening can potentially be performed every other year instead of yearly as with mammograms. This equates to an annual cost of only \$198, less than the average breast screening costs of \$252 in mid-Michigan, Dr. Strahle said.

This is a major breakthrough,” Dr. Strahle said. “I can see a day when we can prevent this disease from killing women.”

[Video links](#)