

Table 6: Summary table of recommendation for screening mammography among women aged 40–49 years

Manoeuvre	Effectiveness	Level of evidence*	Recommendation*
Mammography every 12–18 months†	Relative risk reduction of 18%–45% for breast cancer mortality at 10 years was shown in 2 trials and 1 meta-analysis; no benefit was shown in 6 other trials‡	RCTs ^{2,3,5,6,15–42} (I)§	Current evidence does not support the recommendation that screening mammography be included in or excluded from the periodic health examination of women aged 40–49 at average risk of breast cancer (grade C)¶

Note: RCT = randomized controlled trial.

*See Appendix 1 for definitions of the levels of evidence and grades of recommendations.

†Comparison of RCT results suggests that, if done, frequent screening may be required. The value of adding clinical breast examination to mammography is unclear.

‡The only trial that enrolled Canadian women failed to show an effect of screening mammography, possibly because of low power.

§Six of the 7 RCTs assessed mammography for this age group as a subgroup analysis.

¶This represents a change from the 1994 grade D recommendation.⁴ Level I evidence is available, but some results conflict and not all relevant issues are resolved. Upon reaching the age of 40, Canadian women should be informed of the potential benefits and risks of screening mammography and assisted in deciding at what age they wish to initiate it.

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