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A Day with Dr. László Tabár

There is no doubt that organized breast screening and assessment programs in Ontario are saving some lives, but we can do better. This message was brought home powerfully at a recent Ontario Breast Screening Program (OBSP) conference held in Toronto. The conference was designed to provide the latest information on both mammography screening and breast assessment issues as well as to review the OBSP's results to date.

During his keynote address, Dr. László Tabár, a well-respected and world-renowned Professor of Radiology who is best known for his leadership in breast cancer screening programs in Sweden, emphasized the importance of organized breast screening. He pointed to figures from a recent Swedish study that found a 63% decline in mortality in women aged 40 to 69 who participated in regular mammographic screening. Dr. Tabár stressed that the logical conclusion of the study is that we must strengthen and build our organized screening programs.

Earlier detection is a key factor that has led to a 15% reduction in the death rate from breast cancer in Ontario women aged 50 - 69 between 1986 and 1996, but there is room for improvement. Results from the 1996/97 National Population Health Survey show that 39% of Ontario women in that same age group had not had a screening mammogram during the previous two years.



Dr. László Tabár,
"Brilliant, interesting and
entertaining."

Increasing the numbers of women attending regular breast screening and better coordinating the process for the assessment of breast abnormalities are essential according to Dr. Verna Mai, Director of Screening Programs for Cancer Care Ontario. "To see a greater reduction in the death rate from early detection it is estimated that 70% of women in this age range need to participate in regular breast screening, generally every two years, and we're not there yet."

The Conference offered radiologists and other health care professionals from across the Province an opportunity to learn more about mammographic screening. Conference presenters also included Dr. Martin Yaffe who spoke about the role of physics in the delivery of high quality mammography, Dr. Verna Mai who presented information on the OBSP's Breast Assessment Initiative and Dr. Rene Shumak, OBSP Radiologist-in-Chief and Dr. Anna Chiarelli, Evaluator of Screening Programs for Cancer Care Ontario who reported OBSP results and quality assessment indicators.

A Multi-Dimensional Approach: The Northeast Moves Closer to Reaching OBSP's Screening Goal

Every year, the OBSP moves considerably closer to its goal of screening 70% of women aged 50 - 69. Leading the way in Ontario with a participation rate of 37.4%, the Northeast Region is more than half way toward achieving this goal. In the Sudbury District alone, 88% of women 50 - 69 attended OBSP screening in 1999 - 2000.

According to Carolyn Jackson, Regional Administrator for OBSP's Northeast Region, much of this success can be attributed to a multi-dimensional approach to both recruitment and client service. In the Northeast, all stakeholders are considered clients of the Program. The Region goes out of its way to ensure that everyone's experience with the OBSP works to the benefit of both women and partners in the medical community.

The client oriented approach has been an important factor in achieving upwards of 80% physician support for breast screening in the Northeast. The Program goes above and beyond to offer a flexible recruitment plan that is best suited to the needs of each individual practice. "It's very important that the Program enhance a busy family doctor's practice, rather than create extra work. We offer to adapt the traditional 'Family Practice Recruitment Model' in any way necessary to accommodate individual physicians' offices."

Regular feedback to doctors is extremely important and is provided through timely follow-up, regular communiques and periodic education sessions. Every October during "Think Pink" week doctors' office staff are also acknowledged for their support.

Health care facilities are also regarded as important clients and the Program works diligently to ensure the affiliation process is as seamless as possible for the institution. That strategy has helped to make the Sault Ste. Marie affiliate site among the most successful in the Province. As one of the Program's first affiliates, launched

as a pilot project in 1995, this site has implemented a process that helps to blend diagnostic and screening mammography. The OBSP booking system has been enhanced to fit effortlessly into the hospital's scheduling and records management process through a triage model that allows a physician or client to call one central number to book screening or any other breast procedure (regardless of age).

In the North, the large geographical territory and widely dispersed population present added challenges. As a result recruitment efforts require innovative approaches. For almost a decade, a unique shuttle service, funded by the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation, has provided transportation for women in the outlying areas. This strategy has also helped to address 'hard to reach' populations including many Aboriginal and ethnic women. A Northern Teleconference Network established with Northeastern Public Health Units allows for strategic planning. An OBSP Health Promotion Guide promoting consistent messages and materials is used in all Public Health Districts in the Northeast.

By partnering with community groups as well as the medical community, the Northeast is one step closer to meeting provincial goals and further reducing breast cancer mortality.



Digital Mammography Fact Sheet

By Dr. Martin Yaffe, Physics Consultant, OBSP and Dr. Rene Shumak, Radiologist-in-Chief, OBSP

What is it?

Digital mammography is a new technique for imaging the breast. Like regular mammography, digital mammography uses x-rays to detect small cancers. What is different about digital mammography is that instead of recording the picture on film, a computer is used. The radiologists can adjust the computer images and this may improve our ability to find small cancers. Much of the invention and development of digital mammography involved OBSP scientists here in Ontario.

Is digital mammography better than film mammography?

While we think digital mammography may provide some advantages, this is not yet known. In fact, the largest study that has been published in the scientific literature so far suggests that digital mammography has not been quite as accurate as film mammography. A larger study is just beginning and should provide a more reliable answer to this question in about 3 years. The trial is based in the US, and scientists associated with OBSP will play an integral part in it.

What is the OBSP doing about digital mammography?

While digital mammography for screening is being evaluated, OBSP physicists and radiologists are developing experience with it in diagnostic mammography (where women come to mammography with symptoms and the location of the abnormality is already known). We are keeping a constant watch on the progress of digital mammography so that we can consider using it within the OBSP when it has been proven to perform at least as well as film mammography. Women should know that the mammography currently being performed in the OBSP is of equal or better quality to any that can be obtained in the world and that we will continue to take advantage of improvements in technology as soon as they become available.

Similarities between digital and film mammography

- ◆ They both use x-rays
- ◆ The x-ray doses are similar
- ◆ The breast is compressed
- ◆ The breast is compressed for the same length of time
- ◆ The mammogram is read by a radiologist

Differences between digital and film mammography

In digital mammography:

- ◆ The image is stored in a computer instead of on film
- ◆ The image can be adjusted on the computer display
- ◆ The image can be transferred to another digital site for immediate consultation

Types of Digital Mammography Systems

Currently, there are four manufacturers of digital mammography systems. While all of the systems basically perform the same function, there are differences in their design. Three of the systems employ new specially-designed x-ray machines (DR). The fourth system (CR) employs re-usable plates similar to film to obtain the mammogram. The plates are scanned to read the image and convert it into digital form. These plates can be used with any conventional mammography machine. It is therefore important that the conventional machine be of high quality. The digital mammograms from both types of systems are processed in the computer and then viewed on a very high definition computer screen or printed onto special film for viewing.

Can the Canadian Association of Radiologists-Mammography Accreditation Program (CAR-MAP) assess digital machines?

Not yet. An accreditation program, similar to the one that exists for film mammography, is being developed. Until that program is available, it is important for women to know that all mammography equipment in Ontario, including digital mammography equipment, must be tested on a regular basis to ensure that it is operating properly and safely. In addition, if a woman is to have a digital mammogram, she should ask whether the facility is accredited by CAR-MAP for its film mammography. This indicates that the professionals at that facility have demonstrated a certain level of training and experience and have kept up-to-date in their continuing education in mammography, that is, they believe in high standards. It is then reasonable that when the digital accreditation program comes into being, such a facility is likely to pass.

OBSP Regional Hubs and Affiliated Sites

As of December 2001 there are 84 OBSP screening sites in the Province

Central East Region

<u>Hubs</u>	North York OBSP Centre Scarborough OBSP Centre
<u>Affiliates</u>	
Alliston	Stevenson Memorial Hospital
Barrie	The Royal Victoria Hospital of Barrie
Brampton	William Osler Health Centre DiagnostiCare Ontario, Brampton
Markham	Markham Mammography Clinic Inc.
Mississauga	Credit Valley Diagnostic Centre Credit Valley Imaging Associates DiagnostiCare/King X-Ray and Ultrasound Dixie X-Ray Ltd. RDS Mississauga Diagnostic Imaging & Breast Centre
Newmarket	Southlake Regional Health Centre
Orillia	Ontario Medical Imaging, Colborne St. X-Ray and Ultrasound
Oshawa	Oshawa Clinic Imaging Centre
Toronto	Dixie X-Ray Ltd. DiagnostiCare Ontario, Fairview DiagnostiCare Ontario, Lawrence RDS Malvern Ultrasound and Mammography Quantum Medical Imaging Services Inc. Rosedale Radiology and Ultrasound St. Michael's Hospital Sunnybrook and Women's College Health Sciences Centre
Unionville	Victoria Park Mammography DiagnostiCare Ontario, Unionville

Central West Region

<u>Hub</u>	Hamilton OBSP Centre
<u>Affiliates</u>	
Burlington	Burlington Ultrasound and Radiology
Cambridge	Cambridge Memorial Hospital RDS Diagnostics Ltd.
Guelph	Baker Street X-Ray and Ultrasound
Niagara Falls	Greater Niagara General Hospital
St. Catharines	St. Catharines General Hospital
Simcoe	Norfolk General Hospital
Welland	NHS - Welland County General Hospital

Eastern Region

<u>Hub</u>	Ottawa OBSP Centre
<u>Affiliates</u>	
Barry's Bay	St. Francis Memorial Hospital
Hawkesbury	Hawkesbury and District General Hospital
Pembroke	Pembroke General Hospital
Renfrew	Renfrew Victoria Hospital
Winchester	Winchester District Memorial Hospital

Northeast Region

<u>Hub</u>	Sudbury OBSP Centre
<u>Affiliates</u>	
Bracebridge	South Muskoka Memorial Hospital
Hearst	Hôpital Notre Dame
Kapuskasing	Sensenbrenner Hospital
Kirkland Lake	Kirkland and District Hospital
New Liskeard	Temiskaming Hospital
North Bay	North Bay General Hospital
Sault Ste. Marie	Group Health Centre
Sturgeon Falls	West Nipissing General Hospital
Sudbury	DiagnostiCare Ontario, Sudbury
Timmins	Timmins District Hospital

Northwest Region

Administrative Base: Thunder Bay
Mobile coach serves Northwest Region.

<u>Affiliates</u>	
Fort Frances	Riverside Health Care Facilities, Inc.
Thunder Bay	Thunder Bay Medical Centre Diagnostics DiagnostiCare Port Arthur

South Region

<u>Hub</u>	Windsor OBSP Centre
<u>Affiliates</u>	
Chatham	The Chatham Kent Health Alliance
Leamington	Leamington District Memorial Hospital
Windsor	DiagnostiCare Ontario Windsor Windsor Regional Hospital

Southeast Region

<u>Hub</u>	Kingston OBSP Centre
<u>Affiliates</u>	
Belleville	Belleville General Hospital
Brockville	Brockville General Hospital
Campbellford	Campbellford Memorial Hospital
Peterborough	St. Joseph's Hospital and Health Centre
Picton	Prince Edward County Memorial Hospital
Port Perry	Port Perry Imaging
Trenton	Trenton Memorial Hospital
Victoria County	Ross Memorial Hospital (Lindsay)

Southwest Region

<u>Hub</u>	London OBSP Centre
<u>Affiliates</u>	
Kitchener	RDS Victoria/Kitchener Ultrasound, Mammography and X-Ray
Listowel	Listowel Memorial Hospital
London	DiagnostiCare Women's Imaging Centre London Health Sciences Centre London X-Ray Associates St. Joseph's Centre
Owen Sound	Grey Bruce Health Services
St. Thomas	St. Thomas-Elgin General Hospital
Sarnia	Sarnia General Hospital
Stratford	Jenny Trout Centre - Ultrasound and Mammography Associates of Stratford Stratford General Hospital
Strathroy	Strathroy Middlesex General Hospital
Walkerton	South Bruce Grey Health Centre
Woodstock	Woodstock General Hospital

Breast Assessment Affiliates

<u>Affiliates</u>	
Kingston	Hôtel Dieu Hospital
Listowel	Listowel Memorial Hospital
Ottawa	Ottawa Regional Women's Breast Health Centre
Port Perry	Port Perry Imaging
Renfrew	Renfrew Victoria Hospital
Sudbury	The Sudbury Regional Breast Health Program

On Site Assessment

Hamilton	Hamilton OBSP Centre
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Strengthening Ties is the newsletter of the Ontario Breast Screening Program.

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Produced by: **wordsmith** writing and editing services, Ottawa.