

SYNERGY REPORT

FALL 2014 NEWSLETTER

Breast Density and Risk Assessment

As we recognize National Breast Cancer Awareness Month this October, the issue of breast density is gaining increased attention with more states enacting dense breast notification legislation. To date, 19 states have enacted density-reporting laws, including Henda's Law in Texas, enacted in 2012.

The goal of such mandates is more accurate breast cancer risk assessment and breast cancer prevention; the challenge is balancing the need for supplemental testing with the added risk or undue concern that can stem from such testing.

It is important to assure women that breast density is normal and just one of many factors involved in risk assessment. However, even though breast density has not yet been linked to an overall increase in the risk of death from breast cancer, it remains an important factor that can influence the risk of breast cancer.

In a 2012 statement, the American College of Radiology (ACR) recognized the impact of breast density on mammographic screening, its clinical limitations and how greater breast density results in lower sensitivity for mammography. The ACR Breast Imaging Reporting and Data System describes four categories of breast tissue density and instructs radiologists to include density information in the mammography report for referring physicians. State legislation goes one step further, requiring such information to be included in summary mammography reports to patients and encouraging a physician-patient dialogue about supplemental screening options.

All mammography reports from Synergy contain one of these classifications:

- a:** The breasts are almost entirely fatty
- b:** There are scattered areas of fibroglandular density
- c:** The breasts are heterogeneously dense, which may obscure small masses
- d:** The breasts are extremely dense, which lowers the sensitivity of mammography

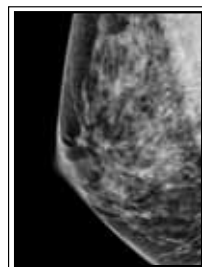
A frank discussion with patients about additional screening options in the scenario of dense or extremely dense breast tissue can help them better understand their density composition.



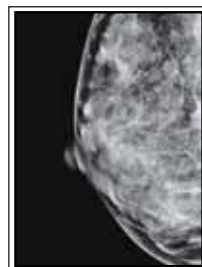
a. The breasts are almost entirely fatty



b. There are scattered areas of fibroglandular density



c. The breasts are heterogeneously dense, which may obscure small masses



d. The breasts are extremely dense, which lowers the sensitivity of mammography



Welcome to the Synergy Report Quarterly Newsletter

In each issue you'll discover more about:

- Current issues affecting radiology and medical imaging
- Compelling patient cases that demonstrate the benefits of working with Synergy radiologists
- Unsung heroes – Synergy radiologists who have made a special contribution to medicine
- The benefits of working with Houston's largest and most experienced radiology team

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Breast Density and Risk Assessment (cont.)

Supplemental screening

Having dense breasts plus one or more additional risk factors for breast cancer may justify the need for supplemental screening after mammography. For women classified as c (heterogeneously dense) or d (extremely dense), supplemental screenings available through Synergy's affiliated hospitals include breast ultrasound, tomosynthesis and breast MRI.

For women at low to moderate breast cancer risk, supplemental screening with ultrasound or tomosynthesis is recommended. For women who are determined to be at high risk for breast cancer (e.g. another family member was diagnosed with the disease), breast MRI is generally recommended. 

For more information on breast cancer risk assessment, contact Synergy at (713) 621-1103.

Synergy Radiology Website Launch


Synergy Radiology Associates is pleased to announce the unveiling of its new website. Patients and physicians visiting www.synradpa.com are greeted with a fresh look and completely redesigned site offering a much-improved overall experience. The website was designed with the navigation and informational needs of both patients and referring physicians in mind.

Patient visitors to the site experience a friendly welcome with easy access to Synergy Radiology services, facility locations and detailed background information on our physician team.

Patients can also read the latest news, link directly to our Facebook and Pinterest social media accounts and navigate to our patient education and patient account portals. To help better gauge patient satisfaction and encourage feedback, a patient survey has been incorporated into the site.

Referring physicians and their staff will find easy-to-access information, including referral form requests and a list of available procedures. All visitors to the site are presented with the benefits of working with Synergy radiologists through messages that convey:

- A patient-centered approach
- The knowledge and experience of board-certified radiologists
- A highly skilled clinical support staff
- Best-in-class imaging interpretations based on our radiologists' subspecialty expertise
- Working with the largest private radiology practice in Houston
- A higher level of quality care through our relationships with some of the biggest names in health care, including Memorial Hermann, HCA and Tenet Health
- An overall commitment to diagnostic imaging and interventional radiology excellence

We look forward to continuing to improve and update the Synergy Radiology website for the most relevant, informative content possible in an easy-to-use environment. 



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UNSUNG HEROES

For each edition of the Synergy Report newsletter, we select a member of our radiology team whose passion, experiences and unique contribution to radiology makes him or her one of our “unsung heroes.” In this newsletter, we’d like to introduce Breast Radiologist Jibi Thomas, M.D.



Jibi Thomas, M.D.

When Dr. Jibi Thomas’ mom, Molley, arrived in the U.S. from India to start a new life, she barely spoke English and was completely on her own. A stranger in a strange land. But his mom was full of fight and passion; she persevered, learned the language and earned enough money to bring Dr. Thomas’ sister and father to the U.S. one year later.

Dr. Thomas was born in Pasadena, Texas, and raised in Houston. He entered medical school at Texas A&M in 1996 thinking he was going to become a surgeon. However, his fourth-year elective in radiology changed everything.

“It was amazing,” said Thomas. “These were the happiest people in the hospital, and I loved that radiologists were always able to help solve the puzzle and have a direct impact on patient care. I did a second rotation later that year, and I knew radiology was for me.”

After medical school, Dr. Thomas completed his residency in diagnostic radiology in 2005 at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center and stayed on to perform general radiology. In his second year as an attending physician at OU Health Sciences, his mom – living in Houston – told him she had an abnormal mammogram. She was subsequently diagnosed with right-sided DCIS (ductal carcinoma in-situ) and scheduled for surgery.

“It was a difficult time for me, being away from my mom but having to stay in Oklahoma City to be with my then wife-to-be, who was undergoing surgery at about the same time,” explained Thomas. “But it also had an impact on my career. I had been at OU as an attending physician for three years, reading images and not doing procedures or seeing patients. I realized I wanted more.”



“My mom is my greatest role model; a small, stout woman, but full of fight and passion. Her experiences led me to believe that I could do this.” – Jibi Thomas, M.D.

Once his mom completed surgery and treatment, Thomas made the difficult decision to give up his full-time, salaried position at OU and return to student life, enrolling in the breast imaging fellowship at Baylor University Medical Center.

“Talking to the radiologist and pathologist who took care of my mom, they really enjoyed what they did, and I could see how much my mom appreciated their helpfulness,” said Thomas. “It just seemed to be a calling.”

Thomas described how seeing his mom battle breast cancer and talking through her experiences informed and inspired his decision.

“I realized, ‘this is something I can do,’” said Thomas. “I was able to personify her experience with breast cancer through my career choice and work. It was the best experience ever; I came out so confident and then interviewed to join the radiology team at Synergy.”

Thomas completed his fellowship in 2009 and has been with Synergy Radiology ever since.

“My mom is my greatest role model; a small, stout woman, but full of fight and passion. Her experiences led me to believe that I could do this.”

Thomas said he is excited to be back in Houston, where he feels like he is truly giving back to the community. His mom is now seven years out from her breast cancer diagnosis and doing wonderfully. 🍷


Synergy Tees Up for Charity

For the fifth consecutive year, Synergy Radiology Associates is a sponsor of the 2014 Partners in Caring (PIC) Annual Golf Tournament. The 26th annual event, which benefits the PIC Employee Assistance Fund at the Memorial Hermann Foundation, is scheduled for Friday, November 7, 2014, at the Cypresswood Golf Club.

Synergy, the only radiology group sponsor, will be providing refreshments and other handouts for participants, with a Synergy tent set up on each of the two courses being used. Our group is also fielding a golf team for the fundraiser.

“Partners in Caring is a wonderful cause that helps thousands of people in need each year,” said Synergy Radiology Associates Chair of the Board and President Stephen C. (“Cal”) Dalton, M.D. “This is the largest fundraiser of the year for this organization, and we’re proud to be participating.”

The Partners in Caring Employee Assistance Fund is a grassroots organization that helps employees in financial need due to crisis or catastrophe. The organization continuously looks for ways to support the vision of the Memorial Hermann Healthcare System and focus on the needs of its employees. Since 1991, Partners in Caring has assisted more than 4,000 Memorial Hermann employees with approximately \$4 million of support.

In addition to the annual golf event, Synergy supports multiple charitable projects and organizations throughout the greater Houston community. For more information on Partners in Caring or the golf tournament, please contact Patricia Louvet at Memorial Hermann at 713-512-6115 or patricia.louvet@memorialhermann.org. 



PHYSICIAN SPOTLIGHT



Amit Mittal, M.D.

We are pleased to welcome Amit Mittal, M.D., to our radiology team. Specializing in diagnostic and musculoskeletal radiology, he was born in the nation’s heartland in Junction City, Kansas, and raised in Houston. Dr. Mittal was most recently on staff at Southlake Radiology.

A graduate of Texas A&M University, Dr. Mittal earned his medical degree from the Baylor College of Medicine. He completed his internal medicine internship and radiology residency at Baylor University Medical Center. Dr. Mittal gained subspecialty expertise in musculoskeletal radiology through his fellowship at the University of Virginia Health System.

Dr. Mittal co-authored “Imaging Evaluation of the Rotator Cuff” in the journal *Clinics in Sports Medicine* and was lead author of “Cystic Meningioma: Unusual imaging appearance of a common intracranial tumor” in *Baylor University Medical Center Proceedings*, the peer-reviewed journal of the Baylor Health Care System.

Dr. Mittal traces his motivation to become a radiologist from his mother’s major surgery when he was very young, and from his father’s health care career as a radiology technologist and radiology department administrator. Dr. Mittal is married with one child. His hobbies include: music; movies; playing and watching basketball and tennis; and relaxing with the family. 