

HCC radiologist honored for breast-cancer study

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STAFF WRITER

NEW BRITAIN — A new, breakthrough method in breast-cancer detection has resulted in an award for a Hospital of Central Connecticut radiologist who led the key study.

An unprecedented, award-winning study led by HCC radiologist Jean Weigert, M.D., shows mea-

surable value of a gamma-imaging test over ultrasound in detecting breast cancer as a follow-up to a mammogram.

"This is a crucial step in the early diagnosis of breast cancer," she said. "We get a more accurate picture. When something appears abnormal, we're fairly comfortable it needs further evaluation."

In April, Weigert, director of Women's Imaging at Mandell & Blau M.D.s PC in New Britain,

received the 2009 Breast Journal Abstract Award at the American Society of Breast Disease 33rd Annual Symposium for her abstract, "Breast-Specific Gamma Imaging Compared to Breast Ultrasound in Patients with Mammographic Abnormalities Requiring Diagnostic Evaluation."

The study used data accumulated from 2005 to 2007, including data gathered at the hospital's Bradley

Memorial campus in Southington. It found that, compared to ultrasound imaging, BSGI provides more sensitivity in the ability to find an abnormality and is more specific in findings for breast cancer, Weigert said. Data compared results of 70 patients who had both BSGI and ultrasound tests. The tests, which also included biopsy, were conducted based on mammogram results.

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Dr. Jean Weigert

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This was the first study comparing breast ultrasound to BSGI results for cancer diagnosis.

Weigert said BSGI can distinguish noncancerous or benign tissue from cancer and locate lesions as small as two to three millimeters. Among women who would benefit from BSGI tests are those with dense breasts, more common in premenopausal women. BSGI studies used the Dilon 6800 Gamma Camera, the only FDA-approved BSGI unit. The noninvasive test is similar to a mammogram but uses less compression. Before imaging, patients received an intravenous radiotracer dye. The dye shows up as a bright spot during the test if cancer is pres-

ent since the dye is more easily absorbed by cancer cells, which have a higher metabolic activity.

"I was delighted to get the award and very surprised," Weigert said. "It's one more example of why BSGI is such a good tool in the work-up of the problematic breast."

Weigert's study was one of three to receive an award at the symposium in Chicago. She plans to conduct a follow-up study and will write an article based on initial findings for *The Breast Journal*.

In practice for 23 years, Weigert is a fellow of the American College of Radiology. A graduate of Upstate Medical Center in Syracuse, N.Y., she did her residency at Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center in New York City.