

SureTouch™ Improves Accuracy of Manual Palpation in Detection of Breast Cancer

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According to Medical Tactile, Inc's Web site and a clinical trial published in the *American Journal of Surgery*, the SureTouch™ tactile sensing device more accurately detects a mass within the breast and more accurately determines if the mass is cancerous than manual palpation of the breast during a clinical breast examination by a healthcare provider.[\[1\]](#),[\[2\]](#) This novel way of screening for breast cancer may ultimately improve breast cancer detection, particularly among women who do not undergo mammography.

Breast cancer is diagnosed in over 200,000 women annually in the United States alone. Screening for breast cancer typically consists of a mammogram, although ultrasonography or magnetic resonance imaging may also be used in some cases. Even though screening with mammography has resulted in improvements in survival of patients diagnosed with breast cancer, there are also some drawbacks to this screening method that a more accurate method for detection could reduce. For example, mammograms are often followed by a biopsy, or removal of tissue for examination under a microscope to determine if cancer exists; a certain proportion of these patients are found not to have breast cancer, and biopsies in these individuals may therefore be considered unnecessary. Drawbacks of unnecessary biopsies include pain, anxiety, increased medical costs, and time burden on medical facilities and patients.

Clinical examination by manual palpation of the breast by a healthcare provider is another screening measure for breast cancer and is recommended as part of the screening process. However, the sensitivity of palpation of breast masses varies greatly among healthcare providers, and breast masses may often be missed altogether through palpation. Results of clinical breast examinations, however, are important because they provide a first-line defense against breast cancer for many women, particularly among women who are younger than 40 years of age (when mammography is not standard) or those for whom mammography is difficult to access. The SureTouch tactile sensing device is a small device that is held in the physician's hand while palpating the breast during a clinical breast examination. The SureTouch system provides an electronic "map" from objective data including suspicious masses and surrounding tissue of the breast. SureTouch is small, portable, non-invasive, and the procedure is not painful. Its results may ultimately help guide future decisions for additional radiologic tests.

A clinical trial published in the *American Journal of Surgery* evaluated the accuracy of SureTouch among women who had breast masses. The study included 110 women who reported a breast mass. These women underwent palpation, then testing with SureTouch, which was followed by ultrasound and mammography.

- SureTouch identified the masses 94% of the time, while physician palpation identified the masses only 86% of the time.
- SureTouch accurately identified masses as cancerous 94% of the time, while physician palpation correctly identified the masses as cancerous only 78% of the time.

SureTouch tactile sensing device has clearance from the United States Food and Drug Administration for documentation and costs a fraction of what mammography costs. Women who are to undergo a clinical breast examination may wish to speak with their physician about the availability of SureTouch.

References:

[1] Medical Tactile, Inc. Breast Cancer Screening Improved with New Imaging Palpation Technology, Study Finds. Available at: <http://www.medicaltactile.com/downloads/MTI060920AmerJournalSurgery.pdf> . Accessed July 2007.

[2] Kaufman C, et al. Digital Documentation of the Physical Examination. Moving the Clinical Breast Exam to the Electronic Medical Record. *American Journal of Surgery*. 2006;192:444-449.

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