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“Very small number of women come forward for cancer screening”

Three-dimensional digital mammography system opened

Though studies show that over 16 per cent of Indian women in the age group of 40-60 face a potential risk of breast cancer, a very small number of women come forward for cancer screening, said Prathap C. Reddy, chairman, Apollo Hospitals Group.

Speaking on Tuesday at the inauguration of one of the first three-dimensional digital mammography systems in south Asia at the Apollo Specialty Cancer Hospitals here, Dr.Reddy said that delayed detection among the risk group can result in one in every 22 women developing breast cancer.

The device which will be used for early detection of tumours uses 3D imaging technology. It involves acquiring images of a stationary compressed breast at multiple angles during a short scan. The individual images are then reconstructed into a series of thin, high-resolution slices that can be used to detect tumours less than 1cm in diameter.

Unlike a regular scan, imaging a human breast is more complex and difficult because of the several layers of tissue. Detecting small tumours, hidden amid a mass of flesh, is tricky and precision imaging technologies can be transformative.

Listing out the benefits of the new technology, Dr.Reddy said that the procedure would be quicker and easier, cause less discomfort to the patient, use low dose of radiation, and greatly improve accuracy.

He added that since the system uses digital technologies, it will enable archiving, post-processing of the image to improve contrast and electronic transfer to another hospital.

Jack Cumming, chairman, Hologic Inc., a medical diagnostics manufacturer which is supplying the imaging system, said “In America, a staggering 44,000 women die of breast cancer every year. About one in eight women have breast cancer in their lifetime. If we can detect breast cancer early enough, there is a 95 per cent chance of survival.”

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