

Health insurance co-payments studied

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Medical scientists determined small health insurance co-payments have a big effect on U.S. mammography rates.

Brown University researchers discovered rates for receiving the breast cancer screening examinations were 8 percent lower in plans requiring co-payments, compared with plans with full health insurance coverage.

"The message is simple and it's startling -- a small co-payment for a mammogram can lead to a sharp decrease in breast cancer screening rates," said Dr. Amal Trivedi, lead author of the study. "Co-payments as low as \$12 deter women from getting mammograms. Because mammograms are critical in the fight against breast cancer, the most common cancer among American women, our findings have important health policy implications."

The researchers at Brown's Alpert Medical School and Harvard Medical School reported their results in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

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