

Core needle breast biopsy safe for patients taking blood thinners

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It is safe to take anticoagulants (blood thinners) before core needle breast biopsies, according to a study performed at the Elizabeth Wende Breast Clinic in Rochester, NY. Core needle biopsies are offered as an alternative to surgical biopsy when a tissue sample of an irregular area in the breast is found by mammogram or sonogram. "They are safer than surgical procedures, require fewer anesthetics, and are accurate," according to Patricia Somerville, MD, lead author of the study.

The study included 200 women who were taking anticoagulants (blood thinners) and 855 women who were not. Adverse reactions, lumps and bruises, after a woman's core needle biopsy were recorded. Results showed that lumps or bruising occurred in 34% of women who were taking blood thinners and 26.5% of women who were not taking them.

"Our study demonstrates that it is safe to perform core needle biopsies on patients taking aspirin and warfarin (another name for coumadin). Patients can remain on their medications and avoid surgical biopsy if the lesion is benign," said Dr. Somerville.

Source: American Roentgen Ray Society

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