The Society Of Radiographers Of Trinidad & Tobago

The Society of Radiographers of Trinidad & Tobago was founded in 1973 with Wilma Collins becoming the first President elect of the Society.

Since its beginning, the Society has held numerous seminars and conferences to help update its members and promote the profession. This academic role has been mandated by its constitution together with its objectives. One of the Society's first stated objectives according to it's Memorandum of Association is:

"To encourage and promote the establishment and maintenance of high professional, technical and ethical standards in the Science of Medical Imaging and Radiotherapy."

The Society became internationally recognized when it gained full membership status into the International Society of Radiographers and Radiological Technologists (ISRRT) four years after its inception.

As part of its constitution an annual general meeting must be held to elect a new leadership or *Executive Committee* to comprise of eight Registered Radiographers, one of whom is chosen to be a Council Member to the ISRRT.

In 2008, the Society developed a website which carries the society's history, local/international news and events, forums and more. It is intended to keep viewers up-to-date with the progress of the association.

To become a Radiographer you can apply to the College of Science, Technology and Applied Arts of Trinidad & Tobago (COSTAATT) to earn a Bachelor of Science Degree in Radiography or Radiation Therapy. Radiographers through this course of study have gone on to practice locally, regionally and internationally as far as Europe, USA and Canada. Post graduate qualifications in other imaging modalities (e.g. CT, Ultrasound, MRI, etc.) can be done via local and/or foreign institutions or even by distance learning.

www.soradtt.com

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The Society of Radiographers of Trinidad & Tobago

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What is Mammography...

Mammography

Mammography is a special type of medical imaging that uses x-rays to examine the breasts. A mammography image or **Mammogram** is used to aid in the early detection and diagnosis of breast disease. Mammography is performed by **Mammographers** (i.e. Radiographers who have been specially educated and trained in breast imaging techniques).

History of Mammography

The foundation of Mammography can be dated as far back as 1913, when a German surgeon, Dr. Albert Solomon, used x-rays to examine mastectomy specimens. Although there were many other contributors to the field of Mammography, it wasn't until the 1950s that this became a widespread screening tool. During the period 1956 to 1959, diagnostic Radiologist, Dr Robert Egan along with his team at the M.D. Anderson Cancer Centre in Houston, Texas, found 238 0f 245 cancers in 1000 patients imaged in that period. Although this proved that mammography could be used to detect breast cancer, it wasn't until the 1960s that a New York Radiologist, Dr Philip Strax collaborated in the first large-scale controlled study to determine the effectiveness of mammography in reducing mortality. This study involving over 62,000 women, found that when compared to unscreened controls, women screened with mammography were 30 percent less likely to die of breast cancer.

Mammograms have been done in Trinidad since the 1970s. Today, Mammograms are available nationwide at all major public hospitals as well as some private institutions.

Uses of Mammography

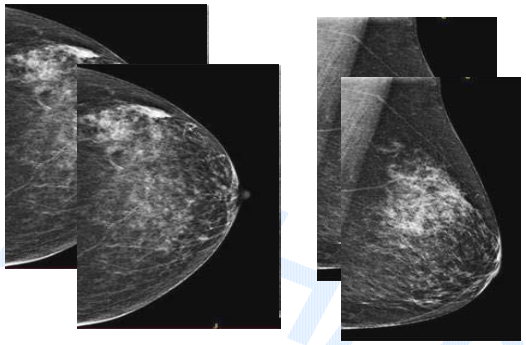
Mammography is used as a screening tool to detect early breast cancer in women experiencing no symptoms (Screening) and to detect and diagnose breast disease in women experiencing symptoms such as pain, lumps or nipple discharged (Diagnostic).

**Although mammograms are mostly done on women, they can also be used to diagnose breast disease in men.*

Screening Mammography is done on women experiencing no symptoms. This plays an important role in the early detection of breast cancer since it can show changes in breast tissues up to 2 years before they are felt by hand. The Ministry of Health recommends that Screening Mammograms should be done every year, beginning at age 40.

Diagnostic Mammography is used to evaluate patients with abnormal clinical findings such as breast lumps, breast pain not associated with menstruation or nipple discharge. Diagnostic mammography may also be done after an abnormal screening mammogram in order to evaluate a specific area of concern.

A Mammography unit is used to perform mammograms. This unit, which is designed exclusively for x-ray exams of the breasts has a special device which compresses and holds the breast in position so that images could be taken at different angles. The mammogram films are then read by a radiologist, a doctor who is specifically trained to interpret x-ray images.



Mammogram images

With increasing technological advancement in Mammography, some public and private institutions now offer **Digital Mammography.** This technique uses a system where the x-ray film is replaced by detectors (similar to those in digital cameras) which convert x-rays into electrical signals. These electrical signals are used to produce images that can be viewed on a computer or printed on special film.

Stereotactic Mammography / Biopsy is also available locally at some public and private institutions. This mammogram-guided biopsy technique enables tissue samples to be taken form a lump too deep to be felt on clinical examination, but can be seen on a mammogram

Radiographers wishing to specialize in Mammography do not necessarily have to go abroad to do so, as there are several foreign distance education programs available to locally-trained radiographers.

All Radiographers including Mammographers are required by law (Act no. 35 of 1985) to be registered with the Council for the Professions related to Medicine/ Radiographers' Board in order to practice in this country.

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