

**Expedited Breast Diagnosis Project**  
**Beaumont Hospital, Royal Oak, Michigan**

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**Purpose:** In 1999, the Health Care Advisory Committee published a report indicating that patients who have been diagnosed with a breast abnormality reported that the *single most important attribute* of a health system was the time to tissue diagnosis (time from initial mammogram to biopsy). The purpose of this study was to determine the time to tissue diagnosis (TTTD) for all breast biopsy types at Beaumont Hospital, Royal Oak, Michigan during a three year period and implement interventions to shorten the time to diagnosis for stereotactic and ultrasound guided biopsy patients.

**Materials and Methods:** Data was retrospectively collected on all breast biopsies performed during the first quarters of 2000, 2001, and 2002 at Beaumont Hospital, Royal Oak, Michigan. The average TTTD for those patients who had all of their imaging/biopsy procedures performed at the Royal Oak campus was calculated for all breast biopsy types. The time to tissue diagnosis was calculated as the number of days from the date of the initial imaging visit (day 0) to the date of the first biopsy. Weekend days were included. An extensive program was implemented in November of 2003 to speed the time to tissue diagnosis for stereotactic and ultrasound guided biopsies. The TTTD for these biopsy types was then calculated for the first quarter of 2004 using the same parameters used in 2000-2002, to determine the effectiveness of the interventions. A second TTTD was also calculated on the post-intervention data excluding all patients who did not take the first available appointment date for imaging and/or biopsy, to more accurately reflect the maximum benefit of the program for those patient who take first available appointments.

**Results:** The stereotactic biopsy average time to tissue diagnosis was 41 days, 41 days, and 41 days for the first quarter of 2000, 2001 and 2002, respectively. Following implementation of the program, the average TTD was reduced to 18 days for all patients and 7 days for patients who took first available appointments. The ultrasound biopsy average TTD was 48 days, 45 days and 44 days in 2000, 2001 and 2002, respectively. Following implementation of the program, the average TTD was reduced to 7 days for all patients and 2 days for patients who took first available appointments.

**Conclusion:** The length of time a woman waits for a final diagnosis, once told her breast imaging study is abnormal, is a very important patient satisfaction/quality indicator that should be monitored on a regular basis. It is possible to significantly reduce time to diagnosis by implementing changes in an institution's imaging/biopsy algorithm, markedly improving patient satisfaction and convenience.