

# Easing the fear of breast exams



With more than 1.2 million people diagnosed with breast cancer every year worldwide, GE Healthcare continues to offer solutions for breast cancer detection and diagnosis that positively affect people's lives<sup>1</sup>.

Patient compliance with breast screening can, however, be a challenge. Breast exams are still perceived as uncomfortable, painful, unnerving and intimidating, and too many women still avoid getting them. In fact, studies have shown that one out of every four women avoids mammograms out of worry or fear<sup>2</sup>. In addition, less than 70% of American women aged 40 and over have had a mammogram in the last two years<sup>3</sup>.

Now, GE Healthcare is out to change that with SensorySuite. SensorySuite reinvents the mammography experience by distracting the patient to reduce the perceived anxiety that could make a woman avoid mammography in the first place.

GE Healthcare's SensorySuite is designed to make the mammography experience less intimidating, by helping to increase comfort and compliance in screening mammograms.



SensorySuite lets the patient choose the environmental ambiance she prefers for her mammogram: Seaside, Garden, and Waterfall.



## TAKING MAMMOGRAPHY TO A WHOLE NEW PLACE

Designed to encourage better mammography cooperation and compliance, SensorySuite surrounds a woman with an interactive experience that simultaneously stimulates three of her senses: sight, smell and hearing. This helps to distract her from the perceived discomfort and anxiety of a mammogram. SensorySuite gives each woman the control to choose the one of three environmental ambiances – seaside, garden or waterfall – that she prefers for her mammogram.

The SensorySuite process begins in the patient's home, where an interactive online presentation, posted on the hospital's or imaging centre's website, presents the SensorySuite experience to the woman. She next explores SensorySuite in the hospital or imaging centre waiting room, via a tablet PC and bookmarks with scent-infused bracelets related to the seaside, garden or waterfall environments.

In the examination suite itself, the patient uses the in-room tablet PC to choose the ambience she'd like to be transported to. Decorative wall panels depict the available ambiances, and a slide show of the chosen ambience is displayed on a flat-screen monitor. A soothing video with ambient sounds of the selected environment plays on a second flat-screen monitor. All the while, a light, calming fragrance is spread throughout the room via a scent diffuser.

With SensorySuite, the patient takes control of her mammography experience by choosing the environment ambience she prefers for her mammogram. This helps to reduce the perceived discomfort of a breast examination, as well as providing a calming, peaceful atmosphere. By making the mammography experience less intimidating, SensorySuite aims to encourage women to get their screening mammograms on a regular basis.



In the examination suite, the woman can use the in-room tablet PC to choose the ambience she'd like to be transported to.

## BETTER PATIENT CARE AND COMPLIANCE

Improving the patient experience also benefits physicians. It helps encourage and increase patient cooperation and compliance with screening mammography; provide a higher level of patient care and satisfaction; and differentiate the physician's practice from others in the area. This can lead to an increase in patient referrals.

SensorySuite is installed and maintained by GE field engineers, and accompanying consumables can be purchased through GE sales representatives. SensorySuite can be installed in a customer's current facility equipped with GE systems or can be purchased with new GE mammography equipment.

With the SensorySuite mammography experience, GE Healthcare has taken another innovative step in bolstering its commitment to fight breast cancer by encouraging early detection.

## REFERENCES

- (1) GLOBOCAN 2008 database (version 1.2): <http://globocan.iarc.fr>
- (2) Two distinct groups of non-attendees in an organised mammography screening programme: Arja R Aro, 'Breast Cancer Research and Treatment', 70: 145-153, 2001.
- (3) According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



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GE Healthcare, a division of General Electric Company

GE Healthcare  
Chalfont St.Giles,  
Buckinghamshire,  
UK

[www.gehealthcare.com](http://www.gehealthcare.com)

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