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An intervention to reduce anxiety and pain associated with mammography

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### **Abstract Body**

The pain of mammography and the anxiety a woman feels about having a mammogram are recognised as significant deterrents to participation in breast screening programs.

Effective pain and anxiety reducing interventions are a much needed addition to screening programs.

With this in mind we installed Sensory Suites into two of our screening sites. The Sensory Suite is designed to stimulate a woman's senses of sight, sound and scent simultaneously to distract her from the perceived pain and anxiety of a mammogram. The woman chooses the experience she wishes to have on a tablet in the waiting room. If for example she chooses a seaside experience she is given a scent bracelet to wear and on entry to the mammogram room 2 large monitors show seaside scenes and the room is filled with the sound of breaking waves and birdcalls.

We surveyed 337 women aged 40 years and over; 166 of these women were screened in a conventional mammogram room and 171 women were screened using the Sensory suite technology.

Using a simple Likert Scale women were asked to rate their anxiety prior to screening and to rate anxiety and pain post screening.

Of all women screened 43 % declared a level of anxiety prior to screening ranging from a little anxious to extremely anxious.

Of these women 35% reported a reduction in anxiety following the mammogram in the conventional mammogram room compared with 44% reduction in anxiety experienced by women using the Sensory Suite.

Similarly 19% of women reported a reduction in perception of pain after having a mammogram in the conventional room compared with 27% reduction in pain perceived by women using the Sensory Suite.

All fixed screening sites of BreastScreen SLHD are now fitted with sensory suites and patient feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.