

Abstract

This paper uses Dutch administrative data to evaluate the survival and employment gains of a nationwide breast cancer screening program in the Netherlands for women who have been diagnosed with breast cancer. This program is a public health policy that targets women aged 50 – 75 and aims at early diagnosis to reduce mortality among women who are diagnosed with breast cancer. The sample consists of 9040 women aged 48 to 53 who are diagnosed with breast cancer and these are followed for four years after being diagnosed. The empirical analysis exploits that women aged 48 and 49 are not covered by the nationwide breast cancer screening program and women aged 50 – 53 are covered. The empirical findings show that nationwide screening for breast cancer reduces mortality with 31 percent and increases employment with 6 percent in the years after being diagnosed. The mortality and employment gains do not diminish during the four years after the diagnosis. From a policy perspective, these findings suggest substantial health and employment benefits of a nationwide breast cancer screening program.