

Performance of a fail-safe system to follow up abnormal mammograms in primary care.

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Grossman E, Phillips RS, Weingart SN. Performance of a fail-safe system to follow up abnormal mammograms in primary care. J Patient Saf. 2010;6(3):172-179.

<https://psnet.ahrq.gov/issue/performance-fail-safe-system-follow-abnormal-mammograms-primary-care>

[Tests pending](#) after [hospital discharge](#) or following a [clinic visit](#) continue to challenge most health care systems. This study implemented a paper-based system to follow up [abnormal mammograms](#) and monitored provider responses to those reminders. Based on a report of abnormal mammograms generated by the radiology department, a practice administrator sent a letter to each provider with a copy of the report and a set of questions on behalf of their quality improvement committee. More than 90% of providers responded to the fail-safe reminders, 8% were unaware of the abnormal test, and there was no follow-up plan in place for 3% of cases. Less experienced providers were more likely to be unaware of abnormal mammograms and many lapses were noted in the context of [care transitions](#). The authors conclude that their paper-based system is feasible and valuable but requires full engagement of providers in the process.