

# Breast cancer screening refined

## Developer: Technology provides more data

By **BILL POWER**  
Business Reporter

Technology that streamlines mammography in the fight against breast cancer will be brought to market within two years by a Halifax group.

There are significant implications for health organizations and for women's health from the pending commercialization of the **Densitas** automated breast density measurement system, developer Mohamed Abdoell said Wednesday.

"Densitas provides one more piece of information for the radiologist in real time when assessing the risk of breast cancer," he said.

Higher levels of breast density have

been linked to increased risk of cancer. Breast density is one of a number of factors assessed during a mammogram, but existing imaging technology lacks the ability to provide an accurate measure.

Radiologists are trained to make a visual density assessment, but Densitas is faster. When taking a mammographic image the density assessment measure can be provided immediately through Densitas.

"Densitas produces quantitative assessments of breast density, fitting seamlessly into the clinical workflow and generating reliable real-time outputs," said Abdoell, an associate professor with Dalhousie University's diagnostic radiology department.

Abdoell has a long list of credentials in research into links between breast density and cancer. He is an affiliated scientist with the QEII Health Sciences Centre.

His partners in the Densitas venture include Tim Burke, who heads **Quark Engineering and Development Inc.**, and Michael Lee, vice-president of venture investments with **Rogers Ventures**.

Abdoell said research indicates women with dense breasts (fibroglandular tissue) can be more than four times as likely of having breast cancer, compared to those with less dense breasts.

He said Densitas streamlines the workflow . . . while providing information for radiologists that can guide patient management strategies.

"Due to more widespread awareness of the risks of breast cancer more wom-

en are participating in screening programs," he said.

He added there is a ready international market for the system because conducting breast density assessments can be time consuming and disruptive of the clinical workflow.

The commercialization of Densitas received a boost when the venture was selected recently as a finalist in the Innovacorp Technology Start-up Competition.

The business partners now have until Dec. 15 to submit a business plan to the judges and must make a pitch for some financial and marketing support in January.

Densitas has demonstrated its clinical capabilities, but a win at the startup competition would advance plans to market the system, said Abdoell.

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