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Cohort fertility patterns and breast cancer mortality among U.S. women, 1948-2003

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Abstract

Epidemiological research has shown that women who have early and numerous births have reduced risks of being diagnosed with breast cancer. We use U.S. Vital Statistics and Census data and age-period-cohort models to examine whether cohort fertility patterns are associated with breast cancer mortality rates among women aged 40 and older in 1948-2003. Cohorts marked by higher proportions childless at ages 15-24 and lower cumulative second birth rates at ages 15-29 have higher rates of breast cancer mortality. This is the first demonstration that cohort fertility patterns have left a clear imprint on trends in U.S. breast cancer mortality rates.

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