



zero
breast cancer

Formerly Marin Breast Cancer Watch

Fall 2006

Importance of Hormones in Breast Cancer

At the *Third Annual Early Environmental Exposures Meeting*, organized by the Breast Cancer and Environment Research Centers (BCERC) Network, Professor Valerie Beral began her talk on *Hormones and Breast Cancer* by asking a critical question: **Given the overwhelming evidence about the importance of hormones in breast cancer, how can this knowledge be applied for prevention?**

Professor Beral is the Director of the Epidemiology Unit at Cancer Research UK in Oxford and is the principal investigator in the Million Women Study, which is the largest study of women's health in the world, involving 1.3 million women aged 50 to 64 from 30 countries. The study was set up specifically to look at the role of different patterns of hormone replacement therapy use in breast cancer. Because of the large size of the study - over one million women, 15,000 of whom developed breast cancer after joining the study - it was possible to arrive at reliable estimates of risk.

Some of the important findings from the Million Women Study that are most applicable to estrogen receptor positive breast cancers, which account for much of the excess incidence of breast cancer throughout the world, are:

- ▶ Hormones taken for contraception or to relieve menopausal symptoms, or hormone replacement therapy, increase the risk of breast cancer while they are being used. However, the increased risk does not persist once use is discontinued.
- ▶ Obesity increases the risk of breast cancer in postmenopausal women and this is due to the increasing levels of circulating estrogen with increasing obesity.
- ▶ Alcohol consumption also increases the risk of breast cancer and this appears to be because alcohol increases circulating estrogen levels.
- ▶ Drugs that block the effect of estrogens, (e.g., tamoxifen), have been shown to improve breast cancer survival and prevent new breast cancers from developing.

To prevent breast cancer, Dr. Beral emphasized the need to **understand exactly which hormones involved in reproduction lead to long-term protection against breast cancer.**

What we **currently know** is that:

- ▶ The longer a woman's reproductive span, as defined by earlier menarche and later menopause, the greater the risk of breast cancer.
- ▶ The risk of breast cancer decreases with the greater number of children women have and the longer they breastfeed. There is a 10% life-long reduction in breast cancer risk for each birth and each year of breastfeeding.
- ▶ Miscarriages and induced abortions occurring in the first three months of pregnancy have little, if any, effect in reducing breast cancer risk.

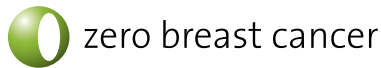
inside

- 3 • Eye on Research
- 4 • Community Education
- 6 • Supporting our Mission
- 8 • Upcoming Events

What we **do not know** and **have not adequately studied** is the identification of the hormonal changes that occur in late pregnancy which lead to a long-term protection against breast cancer.

Why are the results from the Million Women Study important to those of us committed to identifying the preventable causes of breast cancer?

Continued on page 3



Mission Statement

Our mission is to find the causes of breast cancer through community participation in the research process. We focus on identifying environmental factors and the role they play in the development of breast cancer at all stages of life.

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Francine Levien
(1926 – 2001)

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Please continue to support
the work of
ZERO BREAST CANCER
by making a contribution using
the enclosed envelope.
Thank you.

Message from the Executive Director

Janice Barlow

Breast Cancer Rates Fall ... But Not For All

In early September, the National Cancer Institute released “encouraging but cautious” news that the national incidence of invasive breast cancer for all racial/ethnic groups combined leveled off in 2001 and “may” have started to decline in 2002, ending the dramatic increases of the late 1990’s. The recently released “Greater Bay Area Annual Incidence and Mortality Report” compiled by the Northern California Cancer Center also noted that the incidence rates for invasive breast cancer in women living in the Greater Bay Area have “declined for all racial/ethnic groups combined after peaking in the period 1998-2002.” A similar pattern occurred in Marin County.

This news is “encouraging but cautious” because it is not clear whether the change between 2002 and 2003 marks the beginning of a lasting trend. The two reports do not examine why the breast cancer incidence may have leveled off between 2002 and 2003. A strong and probable contributing factor could be the significant drop in the use of hormone replacement therapy (HRT) following the release of a series of research studies reporting from 2000 to 2002 that identified an association between HRT use and breast cancer risk. Other contributing factors may be a leveling off of mammography screening rates or a change in risk factor patterns. Perhaps, although not studied, the leveling off of incidence rates may reflect the increasing number of women who are altering their exposures to environmental chemicals by proactively choosing less toxic or carcinogenic personal care and household products.

While we should celebrate the decline in the national, regional and local incidence and mortality rates, we should not become complacent. Breast cancer continues to be the most common cancer among California women of all races and ethnicities. Marin County’s average annual incidence rates (1998 to 2003) for invasive breast cancer continues to be an estimated 20% higher than the state’s average, and 15% to 17% higher than those of other Greater Bay Area counties.

Most importantly, the possible “leveling off of rates” does not apply equally to racial and ethnic groups. The incidence rate among the Latino and Asian American population is of growing concern, along with the continued increase in mortality rates among African-American women.

As an organization, we feel strongly that breast cancer in the Hispanic, Asian and African-American populations is, in general, understudied and poorly understood.

In addition, the resources for early detection among these underserved communities **here in Marin** have significantly decreased with the closing of the Empona Foundation and the ending of the county’s contract with the UCSF mobile mammography unit.

As a community, we need to address the social inequalities in cancer risk, incidence and prognosis.



Measuring Chemicals in People — *What do you think?*

In September 2006, California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger signed Senate Bill 1379 and created the first statewide surveillance biomonitoring program.

Biomonitoring has great promise for telling us more about our exposures to chemicals and the role environmental factors play in the development of disease, including breast cancer.

However, it is a tool and within that context raises many scientific, social, ethical and policy questions about how the technology is used. While there have been occasional news stories on biomonitoring, most of the discussion around these issues has been primarily limited to scientific and political circles.

In 2004, Zero Breast Cancer sponsored the first national conference: "Critical Issues in Biomonitoring: A Community Forum." As an organization, we recognized that the topic of biomonitoring needed careful public consideration and debate.

We are interested in hearing your thoughts and perspectives about:

- ▶ Whether biomonitoring surveillance programs are needed or desirable?
- ▶ What are the key ethical issues related to biomonitoring? How should it be done responsibly? Who should be tested and with what safeguards?
- ▶ How should results be communicated to those tested and to the public?
- ▶ Should the information be used in making policy decisions? If so, how?

The information you provide will be used to inform the development of a national consensus statement on biomonitoring that includes the voice and the perspectives of the community.

Information about biomonitoring, surveillance biomonitoring, and the benefits and challenges associated with the use of this new technology can be found at www.zerobreastcancer.org. Please send your thoughts about biomonitoring to info@zerobreastcancer.org.



What is Bisphenol-A (BPA)?

BPA is a chemical compound that was created in the 1930's and is used today to make polycarbonate plastic. BPA allows manufacturers to produce clear and flexible plastic for cheap prices that can be used in almost every aspect of our daily lives from DVD's to the lining inside of canned food. Even bottles that you drink out of use BPA.

Who is most at risk?

Children are more at risk from BPA because of the intake per pound. Not only are young children the most vulnerable because of their size, but also because they are still developing. BPA affects children from the time of conception, when the embryo and fetus are vulnerable, and through childhood as the mind and body goes through dramatic growth.

What can I do?

- Educate yourself
- Never heat food or beverages in plastic containers
- Don't let milk sit in plastic for long periods of time
- Don't use harsh detergents or hot water when washing plastic baby bottles
- Toss bottles that look scratched or hazy
- Don't let children put plastic toys in their mouths (give them a better alternative for teething like wood toys)

Further information, products to avoid and product alternatives can be found at: www.zerobreastcancer.org.

Importance of Hormones in Breast Cancer *continued from page 1*

- ▶ The findings have immediate implications for discontinuing the use of hormone replacement therapy (HRT) in any form to relieve menopausal symptoms.
- ▶ Studies on the use of hormone replacement therapy have demonstrated that it was primarily OB/GYN physicians who prescribed HRT in an effort to relieve menopausal symptoms in their patients, which raises the question of what is currently being recommended to patients that has not been adequately studied in relation to future breast cancer risk.
- ▶ The results of the Million Women Study are a reminder that despite a multitude of studies demonstrating a very strong association between age at first birth, number of births, and length of breastfeeding and breast cancer risk, breast cancer advocacy groups **have not been active enough** in advancing a political agenda to provide the necessary resources that might reduce the future risk of breast cancer, including subsidies for stay-at-home moms, childcare for women returning to work, and workplace re-entry programs.

Please help Zero Breast Cancer set our future priorities by providing feedback via our web site, www.zerobreastcancer.org, as to what you think our future focus should be.



Breast Cancer and Environment – Peer Education Tool Kit Zero Breast Cancer

- ▶ **What can teens do about breast cancer?**
- ▶ **What risk factors are relevant to teen girls?**
- ▶ **How can health educators address the topic of breast cancer in the school and community?**

Zero Breast Cancer has created the **Breast Cancer and Environment Peer Education Tool Kit**, which is now posted on our website: www.zerobreastcancer.org.

This single lesson module was pilot tested with 300 Marin teens, reaching student peer educators and 9th – 10th graders in co-ed classrooms. The project results

showed that teens and teachers agreed that this module was valuable for the school community.

The module is based on current breast cancer information and research suggesting that adolescence is a potential window of susceptibility for environmental exposures that can alter breast cancer risk. Messages targeted to adolescent girls help teens to increase their awareness of breast cancer risk and promote healthy habits that can modify future breast cancer risk. A Personal Action Plan helps participants to identify what they will do about this issue.

Breast Cancer and Environment Peer Education Tool Kit includes these resources:

- Breast Cancer Lesson Outline
- Sample Peer Education Activities
- Breast Cancer Fact Sheet - Handout
- Model Teen Brochure
- Instructional Materials Order List
- Sample Evaluation Tool
- Objectives
- Top Twelve Messages
- Sample Personal Action Plan
- References
- Glossary



Zero Breast Cancer, the community outreach agency of the Bay Area Breast Cancer and Environment Research Centers program (BABCERC), is a nationally recognized leader in community-based participatory research. Zero Breast Cancer's Adolescent Breast Cancer Prevention, Risk Reduction and Education Program has partnered with the community to promote age-appropriate breast cancer education outreach for teens and health educators. The Avon Foundation, To Celebrate Life Breast Cancer Foundation, Marin Community Foundation, and Zero Breast Cancer donors are acknowledged for their support of this project.

To set up a workshop or consultation using Zero Breast Cancer's peer education tool kit, please contact Susan Schwartz, MPA, Education Director, at (415) 507-1949, ext. 104.

ZBC Staff Notes

Jo Ann Johnson comes to Zero Breast Cancer from the University of California, Berkeley, where she was an associate specialist in the College of Natural Resources and School of Public Health. She has 10 years experience primarily working with university researchers, extension educators, community colleges, pre-K and K-12 educators, and after-school programs in the areas of program design, management, and evaluation. She specializes in creating public health nutrition outreach education tools, translating nutritional-genomics research, and establishing collaborative relationships.



Jo Ann Johnson, MPH
Community Outreach and Education Coordinator

Jo Ann is a strong advocate for community-based participatory research, science-based interdisciplinary research, and believes in partnering with diverse organizations around key public health issues in an effort to generate successful outcomes and long-term impact.

Jo Ann received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Geography and Interdisciplinary Field Studies from the University of California, Berkeley, and her Master of Public Health degree specializing in Public Health Nutrition from the University of California, Berkeley.

The **MedlinePlus** Web site is a free and comprehensive public health information resource from the world's largest medical library, NIH's National Library of Medicine. MedlinePlus has extensive information from the NIH and other trusted sources on more than 700 diseases and conditions. There are also lists of hospitals and physicians, a medical encyclopedia and a medical dictionary, health information in Spanish, extensive information on prescription and nonprescription drugs, health information from the media and links to thousands of medical clinical trials. www.medlineplus.gov

HONOR THY HEALER

Thursday, May 3, 2007

CALL FOR AWARD NOMINATIONS

Do you have a story of a healthcare professional or any special individual who has played a pivotal role in helping someone in their battle against breast cancer?

We want to hear from you!

Your nominee for our **HONOR THY HEALER AWARDS** could be chosen for recognition at our annual celebration and serve as inspiration to countless others!

There are two community-nominated categories:

HEALING PROFESSIONAL AWARD

Nominees can range from physicians and nurses to social workers, hospice workers, or alternative medicine practitioners. We are interested in healers of every sense of the word.

HEALING PARTNER AWARD

Nominees can be anyone who has helped a loved one through their fight against this disease.

Just write a brief description of the nominee's endeavors, accomplishments and attributes and deliver no later than

January 31, 2007

(Please limit your narrative to 250 words or less)

Please send your nominations to:

Zero Breast Cancer

4340 Redwood Hwy, Ste. C400

San Rafael, CA 94903

sharond@zerobreastcancer.org • Fax: 415.507.1645

Questions? Call 415.507.1949

www.zerobreastcancer.org

Thank you to our Contributors

Zero Breast Cancer is grateful for the support of our contributors throughout the year, whether it be from a foundation grant, sponsoring or attending an event, or making a donation. Please look for the complete list of our 2006 donor acknowledgements in our next newsletter. In the meantime, thank you for your generosity.

For those who wish to view our current list of sponsors, donors, honorariums and memorials, please visit our website at:

www.zerobreastcancer.org/donate.html

Positive Effects of Physical Activity on Breast Cancer

Please join us for a Free Educational Forum and Conversation with Dr. Leslie Bernstein, PhD and Dr. Joan Bloom, PhD.

*Adopting an active lifestyle:
Why exercise may lower women's risk of breast cancer*

LESLIE BERNSTEIN, PHD

*Professor, Preventive Medicine
AFLAC, Inc. Chair of Cancer Research*

University of Southern California, Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center

Physical Activity in young breast cancer survivors

JOAN BLOOM, PHD

*Professor of Health Policy & Management
School of Public Health, University of California, Berkeley*

**Thursday, January 18, 2007
6:30 - 8:30 p.m.**

Board of Supervisors Chambers
3501 Civic Center Drive, Room 330, San Rafael, CA
Seating is limited. Call 415-507-1949 to reserve a space.



This forum is made possible by funds received from the Andrea Fox Fund, established by the Marin County Board of Supervisors and administered through the Marin County Department of Health and Human Services.

NLM, the National Library of Medicine, is the world's largest medical library and the creator of MEDLINE/ PubMed which contains over 16 million references to journal articles from 5,000 worldwide health science journals cited back to the 1950s. NLM provides access to free health information to libraries, health professionals, and consumers around the world.

The free resources listed below will help people to understand their health and health-related topics, and make decisions for themselves or someone else. The information originates from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and other reliable and trusted sources. **www.nlm.nih.gov** or call 1-888-346-3656.

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Wells Fargo Mortgage Opportunity

Tina Jennings, Senior Loan Officer at Wells Fargo Home Mortgage in Mill Valley, will make a \$300 donation to a charity of the client's choice at the close of escrow on a new loan. If you are in the market for a new home loan and would like to have Wells Fargo make a donation to Zero Breast Cancer in the process, please contact Ms. Jennings.

Her office is at 18 Miller Avenue in Mill Valley. She can be reached at 415-389-8951.

DONOR PROFILE

Spotlight On Our Corporate Sponsors

Every October during Breast Cancer Awareness Month, large sums of money are raised for breast cancer campaigns. Many "pink ribbon" products are sold in the name of finding the causes or a cure for breast cancer. Millions of dollars are raised through these "cause marketing" campaigns. While this type of publicity effectively raises significant dollars, much of it goes to national breast cancer organizations, a few with local affiliations.

Zero Breast Cancer would like to acknowledge our own local corporate benefactors. These are the members of our business community who have supported Zero Breast Cancer (ZBC) over the years because they want to help in the efforts to find the preventable causes of breast cancer. It is not about selling products or improving their bottom line. It is about supporting research and community education, with the hope that by finding the causes, breast cancer will ultimately be eliminated in our community.

ZBC's corporate sponsors have been numerous and generous. We would especially like to acknowledge those whose generosity can be measured at the multi-thousand dollar level. Please go to www.zerobreastcancer.org for a complete listing of our corporate sponsors. *We applaud the generosity of these businesses, and all of the local businesses that support our mission.*

Special Thanks for Foundation grants and events benefiting Zero Breast Cancer

Zero Breast Cancer gratefully acknowledges receipt of grants in 2006 from the **Avon Foundation**, the **Norman Raab Foundation**, **To Celebrate Life Breast Cancer Foundation**, the **Marin Community Foundation**, and the **San Francisco Foundation**.

We would like to acknowledge and thank **Gina Catania**, producer of 3 Divas, 6 Breasts and One Great Night, for two concerts at the Lark Theater Café that benefited Zero Breast Cancer; **Whole Health Associates Center for Integrative Medicine** for making Zero Breast Cancer the beneficiary of its recent 8th anniversary community health fair; and **Susan Zelinsky** of Wine Women & Song for her two benefit shows this fall.

Zero Breast Cancer presented two of the 45 posters displayed during the NIEHS Environmental Exposures Meeting. One of them, *The Adolescent Breast Cancer Prevention, Risk Reduction and Education Project*, which summarized the results of Zero Breast Cancer's 2006 pilot project with Drake High School, was awarded the **Best Community Outreach and Translation Poster**.

Four Drake High School students were in attendance and shared the award with Janice Barlow and Susan Schwartz.





Dipsea Hike/Run Survey Results

As our friends and supporters know, the annual Dipsea/Hike Run did not occur this summer in order to give the planning committee a chance to rethink the event. A survey was sent out soliciting input from the participants and several other alternative routes were considered. After much review and discussion, the planning committee has recommended that the event continue on the Dipsea Trail. However, there are changes in store that will make the event better than ever.

We are very excited to begin planning for the fifth annual Dipsea Hike/Run. One of the changes next year will be moving this event to a weekend in August near the beginning of the school year. The new date will be announced in the next issue of our newsletter.

We're looking for volunteers to join the planning committee. Please email Sharon Doyle at sharond@zerobreastcancer.org or call 415-507-1949 ext 102 and leave a message if you want to help. We look forward to expanding our planning committee. It is a great way to get involved!

Avon Walk for Breast Cancer

More than 2,300 people participated in the Bay Area **Avon Walk for Breast Cancer** this July, raising over \$5.4 million to be distributed locally. Zero Breast Cancer was invited by Avon to staff one of the cheering stations along the route. Board members Katie Beacock and Maureen Cronan, Development Director Sharon Doyle and teen volunteer Colleen Kleier (pictured) thanked the walkers as they passed through Mill Valley and offered words of encouragement.



Zero Breast Cancer is pleased to be the recipient of funding for a fourth year. The Avon grant monies help fund a variety of ZBC's activities from our adolescent breast cancer education program to supporting the work of our staff environmental epidemiologist.

Beautiful Jewelry to Support Breast Cancer Research

Landor Associates, the internationally renowned branding company, created our new name, visual identity, and the concept for Zero Breast Cancer jewelry. Well-known Mill Valley jewelry designer **Kathleen Dughi** took the design and had it made into jewelry. The result is a limited edition collection of exquisite 18 karat gold and sterling silver pendants and pins in our Zero logo.

By purchasing one of these pieces, you will be making a personal statement to end breast cancer. The proceeds will be used to continue to support our research, education and advocacy programs. The jewelry is available for sale. Please visit our website at www.zerobreastcancer.org for details.



WINE, WOMEN & SONG: Susan Z

For the eighth year, **Susan Zelinsky** and several guest artists performed two fabulous musical shows to benefit local breast cancer nonprofits.

Mill Valley's Sweetwater was filled to capacity for a concert on September 16th. The Throckmorton Theatre was the venue for the sold out Breast of Broadway on October 22nd.

Zero Breast Cancer is grateful for friends like Susan Z and Eileen Grady. They not only raise funds for the fight against breast cancer, but they produce wonderful music in the process.

Thank you!



upcoming events

January 18, 2007

Positive Effects of Physical Activity on Breast Cancer

With Dr. Leslie Bernstein and Dr. Joan Bloom.

For more information see page 5 or visit:

www.zerobreastcancer.org/events.html

March 10, 2007

Communities Coming Together to Understand

Girls' Development During Puberty

For more information and updates visit:

www.zerobreastcancer.org/events.html

May 3, 2007

8th Annual Honor Thy Healer Awards and Celebration

Mark your calendars now!

For more information and updates visit:

www.zerobreastcancer.org/events.html

August, 2007

Zero Breast Cancer's Dipsea Hike/Run

Our annual event will return in the summer of 2007.

Mark your calendars now!

For more information and updates visit:

www.zerobreastcancer.org/events.html

JOIN US!!

Help us plan the upcoming
**5th Annual
Dipsea Hike/Run**
to benefit Zero Breast Cancer

We are looking for volunteers to join our planning committee. Contact Sharon Doyle at 415.507-1949 ext 102 or email her at sharond@zerobreastcancer.org

Plan Your Year-End Giving

In doing your year-end tax planning, please consider a gift of stock or a vehicle donation to Zero Breast Cancer.
Go to: www.zerobreastcancer.org/donate.html for details.



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