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Droop Phobia, The Bra, And Breast Cancer

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News has busted out around the globe recently about bras causing breasts to droop. The news was quite a shock to our breast obsessed, body image maladjusted culture.

The French researcher doing this 15 year study, Prof. J.D. Rouillon, found that breasts became firmer and lifted after the bra was eliminated, and even stretch marks disappeared. Back pain also ended. The conclusion was that bras cause breast damage and women would be better off without them.

We have been saying for the past 20 years that bras cause breasts to droop. The mechanism is easy to understand. When part of the body is artificially supported, the body becomes reliant on that support. Artificial support from bras causes atrophy of the natural suspensory ligaments of the breast. Use it or lose it.

Corsets and girdles did the same thing to abdominal muscles. Internal structures weaken when the body is supported from the outside.

This information is not really news to the lingerie industry. In the UK documentary, bras—The Bare Facts, released in 2000 on the Channel 4 program called Dispatches, for which I was also interviewed, John Dixey, former CEO of bra-maker Playtex, explained, “We have no evidence that wearing a bra could prevent sagging, because the breast itself is not muscle, so keeping it toned up is an impossibility... There's no permanent effect on the breast from wearing a particular bra. The bra will give you the shape the bra's been designed to give while you're wearing it.”

Of course, bras are sold with the misinformation that wearing them will prevent breasts from drooping. And women fear droop more than almost anything else, making this a successful, if incorrect, sales piece. In fact, women have also been told that they need to sleep in their bras to prevent droop. Wearing bras 24/7 has become commonplace. Of course, so has breast cancer.

Our exploration of the bra/cancer link started accidentally, when my wife, Soma, discovered a lump in her breast. At the time she was pregnant, and we were doing fieldwork in Fiji. A week before that frightening discovery, we had been on a remote Fijian island where bras were rare, and a teenage girl saw Soma's bra drying on a clothesline. She asked what it was for, and wasn't it tight? Soma replied it was just something women are taught to wear and that, yes, it can be tight, but you get used to it.

Once we discovered the lump, we went back to the U.S. in a hurry in near panic. We wanted to know the cause of this problem, since without knowing the cause you cannot effectively treat it. The conversation with the Fijian teen was still fresh in our minds.

Soma removed her bra after the long flight back from Fiji, and we looked at her breasts for clues to the cause of her lump. There were red marks and indentations outlining her breasts left by the bra. These were common for her, and we paid no attention to these before. But now these were important clues.

Anyone with training in the operation of the lymphatic system knows how easily the small, delicate lymphatic vessels can be constricted by pressure, impairing lymphatic flow. The red marks and indentations around the breasts after removing the bra are signs of constriction. If the lymphatic vessels in the breasts are
compressed and constricted by the bra, it could impair the drainage of lymph fluid from the breast tissue. Since the lymphatics are also responsible for removing toxins, cancer cells, and other contaminants from the tissues, these toxic substances might accumulate in the breast tissue if the lymphatics were constricted.

In addition, our modern exposure and consumption of cancer causing chemicals in our petro-chemically polluted food, air, and water results in greater toxin load throughout the body, and these toxins must be eliminated with the help of the lymphatic system. So wearing a constrictive bra may concentrate these cancer-causing toxins in the breasts by impairing their elimination via the lymphatics. Over time, this may cause the breasts to develop cancer.

Essentially, we reasoned that the cause of breast cancer could be a combination of cancer-causing toxins and the bra. The constriction from the bra concentrates these toxins in the breast tissue. The toxins are the bullets, and the bra points them directly at the breasts.

We tested this theory in our 1991-93 Bra and Breast Cancer Study of nearly 5,000 women, which is detailed in our book, Dressed To Kill: The Link Between Breast Cancer and Bras. We found that the longer and tighter a woman wore a bra, the higher her chances of developing breast cancer. The risk climbed after 12 hours of bra wearing, with 24/7 bra wearers having the highest incidence of breast cancer of any group, over 125 times that of a bra-free woman. This link is stronger than the one between smoking and lung cancer. Bra-free women also happen to have about the same low breast cancer incidence as a man.

We did a follow-up study in Fiji, where about half the women are bra-free. We discovered that — given the same village, with the same genetics and diet — the women getting breast cancer were the working women who had to wear bras for work. We also discovered that bra-free cultures were relatively free of breast cancer, and their rates of developing this disease increased as the bra became adopted as essential clothing.

We also discovered that women who had stopped wearing bras after learning about our research experienced an end to breast pain and cysts. Fibrocystic breast disease, also known as benign breast disease, should be called “tight bra syndrome.” The fluid in the cysts is backed-up lymph resulting from bra-caused constriction. Get rid of the bra, and the cysts empty.

Our research was the first study to look directly at the bra/cancer link. We were amazed that nobody else had studied bras as a cause of breast cancer, which is like ignoring cigarette smoking while studying lung cancer. There was a 1991 Harvard study (CC. Hsieh, D Trichopoulos (1991). Breast size, handedness and breast cancer risk. European Journal of Cancer and Clinical Oncology 27(2):131-135.). This study found that, “Premenopausal women who do not wear bras had half the risk of breast cancer compared with bra users...” However, this study was not about bras, per se, but was using bra size as an indicator of breast size, which was the focus of the study. Their discovery of a bra/cancer link was a surprise and they did not recognize its significance, so they tried to rationalize the findings away as a fluke.


More recently, our research showing a bra/cancer link has been verified by a Venezuelan medical team. In 2011 a study was published, in Spanish, confirming that bras are causing breast disease and cancer. [http://www.portalesmedicos.com/publicaciones/article/3691/4/Caracterizaciones-mamentarias-generadas-por-el-uso-sostenido-y-seleccion-incorrecta-del-brassier-en-pacientes-que-acuden-a-la-consultas-mamograficas/] It found that underwire and push-up bras are the most harmful, but any bra that leaves red marks or indentations may cause disease.

This is the third study, in addition to our own, that supports the bra/cancer link! No study refutes the link.

Why have there not been more studies? The cancer detection and treatment industry still wants to ignore the link and...
have women come for more mammograms or, better yet, for a prophylactic mastectomy, removing the breasts to prevent breast cancer. (It’s amazing they are able to pull that off!) For the cancer detection and treatment industry, breast cancer is too profitable treating with drugs/surgery/radiation to consider a lifestyle cause that may end this epidemic. The lingerie industry is also working with the cancer industry to make sure no further research is done, with the hope that limiting such research can prevent future class action lawsuits.

The American Cancer Society and Susan G. Komen Foundation are insisting that the bra/cancer link is a “myth” and does not deserve research attention. They will look at all sorts of lifestyle issues causing breast cancer, such as using hair straighteners, or living near electric power lines, or whether you are right handed or left handed. But they refuse to look at the bra connection.

So the only studies of bras and breast cancer to date are two US studies, one China study, and a Venezuelan study, all showing a significant link. The good news is that women don’t need more studies to stop wearing bras. Breast cancer is preventable, if we can get past the cultural obsession with needing artificially shaped breasts and the medical self-interest in profiting from this disease.

That’s why the recent news about breast droop being caused by bras is encouraging. Many women fear droop even more than cancer. Aesthetics trumps health in a culture where looks are everything and books are judged by their cover.

And women do feel they are being judged for their appearance. In our culture, women are often treated as objects, especially their breasts.

So this news about bras causing breasts to droop is a powerful motivator to get rid of the bra. Women will ditch the bra to look better, and will be preventing breast cancer at the same time—a positive side effect.

Of course, naturist women benefit from their top freedom, sparing their breasts of bra caused constriction. It would be an interesting study to see whether naturist women wear bras less frequently and have a lower than average incidence of breast cancer. Most probably do not sleep in bras, which is the worst of the bra wearing behaviors. Hopefully, they will not opt for cosmetic surgery as a lifting alternative, which has its own health problems and a lifetime commitment of repeated surgeries.

Body acceptance is clearly the answer, and most naturist women embody this principle and set an example of mental and physical health for other women. Of course, body acceptance is antithetical to our culture’s fashion fetishes and need to turn the human body from natural to artificial.

In fact, because of a breast fetish, any mention of breasts and bras is regarded by many people as inherently sexual, to the point that even researchers are suspected of personal ulterior motives for their study of this issue. Some of the news coverage of the French droop study and the online comments were very revealing. It was suggested that a male researcher studying breasts for 15 years must somehow be a sexual pervert, and that the study was therefore “creepy.” Others were jealous and wanted his job.

The fact is, bras and breasts have become so sexualized that it is hard for people to think of them in clinical, scientific terms. Even scientists are brainwashed like the rest of society to think of bras and breasts in sexual terms. For example, years back I was contacted by a man who was a retired cancer researcher at NIH who thought highly of our bra/cancer theory. While still at NIH, he tried talking about the theory with a female colleague. She took immediate offense and accused him of harboring some sexual issues. It seems that a man, regardless of his intentions or occupation, is suspected of perversion by merely mentioning the bra/cancer link.

Our culture is so messed up about breasts and bras that we cannot talk about this issue in serious terms without someone sneering or getting uncomfortable and start calling names. The subject is taboo. The only ones allowed to talk about bras and breasts are lingerie sales people, who tell women bras are essential to prevent droop, and that the link between bras and cancer is a “myth.”

Speaking of myths, those supporting bra use often refer to National Geographic pictures of droopy, bare-breasted African women as proof that gravity will win without a bra. But don’t be duped by the African droop. These women often nurse many children, who tug on their breasts for years on end. And some tribes duped by the African droop. These women often nurse many children, who tug on their breasts for years on end. And some tribes actually hang weights from their breasts to make them stretch. Different strokes for different folks.

We must also advise women who are wanting to try bra-free that any pain you experience once you remove your bra is a sign that you have become addicted, or conditioned, to the bra. Because of the constriction, lymphatic drainage may have been impaired, resulting in fluid accumulation and heavier, soggier, and saggier breasts. Over a short time the fluid will leave and your breasts will feel less heavy and sore. Ligaments will start working again. The breasts will lift and tone.

And activities that now give you breast discomfort, like jogging or rebounding, will start to feel good over time without any breast constraint. This breast movement is important for healthy circulation and does not require the artificial support of a bra. The female breast was not designed with a flaw that requires 20th Century lingerie to correct.

It is also important to get past droop phobia. It’s nothing but a cultural con, an artificial need created to sell an artificial support. Plastic surgeons eager tostuff and cut breasts into fashionable dimensions add to the pressure to conform.

Breasts are big business. So is cancer. The link is the bra. Now that bras have been busted over droop, there may be some progress in ditching the bra and ending this breast cancer epidemic.

To find out more about our research, and other culture-caused diseases you can prevent by simple lifestyle changes, go to our website www.KillerCulture.com. N