

Droop Phobia, The Bra and Breast Cancer

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JUNE 1, 2014

News has busted out around the globe recently about bras causing breasts to droop.

The French researcher doing this 15 year study, Prof. J.D. Rouillon, found that the breasts toned 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 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*, found that the longer and tighter a woman wore a bra, the higher her chances of developing breast cancer. 24/7 bra wearers have the highest incidence of breast cancer of any group, over 125 times that of a bra-free woman. Bra-free women also happen to have about the same low breast cancer incidence as men. On the other hand, three fourths of 24/7 bra wearers developed breast cancer.

Our research has been recently 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/articles/3691/1/Patologias-mamarias-generadas-por-el-uso-sostenido-y-seleccion-incorrecta-del-brassier-en-pacientes-que-acuden-a-la-consulta-de-mastologia-](http://www.portalesmedicos.com/publicaciones/articles/3691/1/Patologias-mamarias-generadas-por-el-uso-sostenido-y-seleccion-incorrecta-del-brassier-en-pacientes-que-acuden-a-la-consulta-de-mastologia) It found that underwired 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.

The other two include 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...”

A 2009 Chinese study (Zhang AQ, Xia JH, Wang Q, Li WP, Xu J, Chen ZY, Yang JM (2009). [Risk factors of breast cancer in women in Guangdong and the countermeasures]. In Chinese. *Nan Fang Yi Ke Da Xue Xue Bao*. 2009 Jul;29(7):1451-3.) found that NOT sleeping in a bra was protective against breast cancer, lowering the risk 60%.

(Editor’s note: Since the publication of this article there have been additional studies supporting the bra-cancer link. See references at the end of this article.)

Meanwhile, 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!)

On a personal note, I must admit it feels good seeing researchers around the world looking into the harm caused by bras. Breast cancer is preventable, if we can get past the cultural obsession with needing artificially shaped breasts.

What’s surprising is that 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 as a positive side effect.

One last note. Some of the news coverage of the French study and the online comments were very revealing. It was suggested that a man studying breasts for 15 years must somehow be a sexual pervert, and that the study was therefore “creepy”.

The fact is, discussing breasts and bras brings out the adolescent in many people. And medical researchers are no exception.

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, is suspected of perversion by merely mentioning the bra/cancer link.

This is another aspect of the culturogenic nature of breast cancer. 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 the bra 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 actually hang weights from their breasts to make them hang. Different strokes for different folks.

We must also advise women who are wanting to try being 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, soggy, 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 to stuff 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.

SOME STUDIES THAT SUPPORT THE BRA-CANCER LINK

- 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..."

- 1991-93 U.S. Bra and Breast Cancer Study by Singer and Grismaijer, published in *Dressed To Kill: The Link Between Breast Cancer and Bras* (Second Edition, Square One Publishers, 2018). Found that bra-free women have about the same incidence of breast cancer as men. 24/7 bra wearing increases incidence over 100 times that of a bra-free woman.
- Singer and Grismaijer did a follow-up study in Fiji, published in [Get It Off!](#) (ISCD Press, 2000). Found 24 case histories of breast cancer in a culture where half the women are bra-free. The women getting breast cancer were all wearing bras. Given women with the same genetics and diet and living in the same village, the ones getting breast disease were the ones wearing bras for work.
- A 2009 Chinese study (Zhang AQ, Xia JH, Wang Q, Li WP, Xu J, Chen ZY, Yang JM (2009). [[Risk factors of breast cancer in women in Guangdong and the countermeasures](#)]. In Chinese. *Nan Fang Yi Ke Da Xue Xue Bao*. 2009 Jul; 29(7):1451-3.) found that NOT sleeping in a bra was protective against breast cancer, lowering the risk 60%.
- [2011 a study](#) was published, in Spanish, confirming that bras are causing breast disease and cancer. It found that underwired and push-up bras are the most harmful, but any bra that leaves red marks or indentations may cause disease.
- 2014 [Lymphedema and subclinical lymphostasis \(microlymphedema\) facilitate cutaneous infection, inflammatory dermatoses, and neoplasia: A locus minoris resistentiae](#). *Clin Dermatol*. 2014 Sep-Oct;32(5):599-615.
- 2015 [Comparative study of breast cancer risk factors at Kenyatta National Hospital and the Nairobi Hospital](#) J. Afr. Cancer (2015) 7:41-46. This study found a significant bra-cancer link in pre-and post-menopausal women.

- 2016 Wearing a Tight Bra for Many Hours a Day is Associated with Increased Risk of Breast Cancer Adv Oncol Res Treat 1: 105. This is the first epidemiological study to look at bra tightness and time worn, and found a significant bra-cancer link.
- 2016 Brassiere wearing and breast cancer risk: A systematic review and meta-analysis World J Meta-Anal. Aug 26, 2015; 3(4): 193-205 "This systematic review and meta-analysis aimed to evaluate the association between 8 areas of brassiere-wearing practices and the risk of breast cancer. Twelve case-control studies met inclusion criteria for review. Although the meta-analysis shows statistically significant findings to support the association between brassiere wearing during sleep and breast cancer risk, evidence was insufficient to establish a positive association between brassiere wearing (duration and type) and breast cancer risk. A large-scale epidemiological study is needed to examine the relationship between various forms of brassiere exposure and breast cancer risk."
- 2016 Lymphatic Vessels, Inflammation, and Immunity in Skin Cancer Cancer Discov. 2016 Jan; 6(1): 22–35.
- 2017 Surgical damage to the lymphatic system promotes tumor growth via impaired adaptive immune response Journal of Dermatological Science April 2018 Volume 90, Issue 1, Pages 46–51 "These results strongly indicate that surgical damage of the lymphatic system may promote tumor progression via impaired adaptive immune response."
- 2018 Mechanical forces in skin disorders Journal of Dermatological Science Available March 2018 "Mechanical forces are known to regulate homeostasis of the skin and play a role in the pathogenesis of skin diseases....Acral melanoma predominantly occurs in the weight-bearing area of the foot suggesting the role of mechanical stress.

Increased dermal stiffness from fibrosis might be the cause of recessive dystrophic epidermolysis bullosa associated squamous cell carcinoma."

- 2018 [Lymph stasis promotes tumor growth](#) Journal of Dermatological Science "(t)hese findings come as no surprise to us who for a long time have been aware that alterations in regional lymphatic flow may produce dysregulation in skin immune function and consequent oncogenesis. In fact, since 2002, our team has held the view that lymphedematous areas are immunologically vulnerable sites for the development of neoplasms as well as infections and immune-mediated diseases. In recent years, increasing evidence has confirmed this assumption."
- 2018 [How Bras Cause Lymph Stasis and Breast Cancer](#) Academic.edu "Recent studies are showing that lymph stasis causes cancer by reducing immune function. This article draws on these studies to further explain how constriction from tight bras results in lymphatic impairment in the breasts and an increased incidence of breast cancer."