

Mammograms, "Worse Than Useless"

Lyle Loughry, June 2008

This is a revealing, interesting and challenging article from one of my medical heroes (and believe me, I have very few), Dr. William Campbell Douglass II, M.D. As you read his abbreviated article, think about this quote from a vaccine-researcher who worked for many years in the labs of major pharmaceutical houses, as well as the US Government's National Institutes of Health. He retired during the 90's. He says he was disgusted with what he discovered about vaccines. *"At the highest levels of the medical cartel, vaccines are a top priority because they cause a weakening of the immune system. I know that may be hard to accept, but it's true. The medical cartel, at the highest level, is not out to help people, it is out to harm them, to weaken them, to kill them."* That last sentence can also apply to questionable medical procedures other than vaccines, like mammograms. To listen to a complete interview with this man of science, after considering this article about mammograms, go to my drinkcleanwater.com website, and into the Recorded Interviews section, and click on The Truth About Vaccines.
Lyle

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False positives = true negatives

A couple of recent items in the news have given me an opportunity to revisit a core issue of mine: The needlessness, hazardousness, and inherent unreliability of mammograms.

Now, what you're about to read may come as a shock to you - it's certainly not breaking news to me: **There are negative effects to the all-too-common occurrence of false-positive mammograms.** According to a recent Associated Press story, women who are falsely informed that their mammograms reveal the likelihood of cancer often suffer serious anxiety - even long after they are made aware of the false alarm... No, really? You don't say.

At first, I semi-entertained the notion that the article was an April Fool's joke. It came out around the first of April - and it's so absurd to put this forth as news that I found myself second-guessing the piece's seriousness. I mean, do we really need an AP article to explain to us that it can be traumatic to receive a mistaken diagnosis of cancer?

Apparently, we do. And according to the piece, a new analysis of 23 existing studies encompassing over 300,000 women conducted by scientists from the University of North Carolina (UNC) concludes that such false-positive results spur these distraught women to undergo even MORE hazardous mammography in their attempts to confirm or disconfirm the original test's finding.

As you may already know, my life's research and experience have convinced me beyond any doubt that in the vast majority of cases, mammograms are less accurate than manual breast cancer screenings - and that the unnatural compression of the breast during mammography actually increases the spread of any cancerous tissues that may be present.

So basically, they're **worse than useless**. They exist only to **make money** for mammography labs and radiologists, and **provide jobs** for the radiation technicians. Honestly, that's my opinion of them. But I digress...

We were talking about a mammogram study that focuses on the high levels of anxiety experienced by women who suffer from false positive breast cancer screenings. But this seems curious to me - since every mainstream doctor and major medical media outlet (including the AP, generally) holds the mammogram up as nearly infallible.

To hear these entities trumpet the mammogram's praises, there should NEVER BE a false positive! But, I can't sum it up any better than the UNC study's lead author, who called the lasting effects of false-positive anxiety an "**unnecessary consequence of poor medical care**." Another expert source quoted in the AP article characterized mammograms as "**imperfect**

tests."

Screaming about malignant screening,
William Campbell Douglass II, M.D.

While Dr. Douglass doesn't speak to this issue in this particular article, an additional effect of "false positives" would be that the resulting anxiety causes a drop in the immune system's effectiveness which, in turn, increases the possibility of cancer or other immune related health issues.
Lyle

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Another highly respected alternative doctor, Dr, Joseph Mercola, notes that breast cancer is the second most deadly form of cancer for women in the U.S. Only lung cancer claims more women's lives than breast cancer. According to Cancer.org's latest report, **Breast Cancer Facts & Figures 2007-2008**, 2007 ushered in more than 178,000 new cases of invasive breast cancer, and more than 40,000 women died from the disease.

Unfortunately, conventional medicine is stubbornly holding on to outmoded ideas of cancer detection and treatment, no matter how ineffective it's been proven to be. Mammography is a perfect example of this stubborn, head-in-the-sand approach to cancer screening. Although Health officials recommend that all women over 40 get a mammogram every one to two years, **there is no solid evidence that mammograms save lives**, and the benefits of mammograms are controversial at best.

Meanwhile, the health hazards of mammography have been well established.

John Gofman, M.D., Ph.D. - a nuclear physicist and a medical doctor, and one of the leading experts in the world on the dangers of radiation - presents compelling evidence in his book, **Radiation from Medical Procedures in the Pathogenesis of Cancer and Ischemic Heart Disease**,

that over 50 percent of the death rate from cancer is, in fact, induced by x-rays. The routine practice of taking four films of each breast, annually, results in approximately 1 rad (radiation absorbed dose) exposure, which is about **1,000 times greater than that from a chest x-ray**. Even the American Cancer Society lists high-dose radiation to the chest as a medium to high risk factor for developing cancer.

X-rays and other classes of ionizing radiation have been, for decades, a proven cause of virtually all types of biological mutations. When such mutations are not *cell-lethal*, they endure and accumulate with each additional exposure to x-rays or other ionizing radiation. X-rays are also an established cause of genomic instability, often a characteristic of the most aggressive cancers. Additionally, radiation risks are about **four times greater** for the 1 to 2 percent of women who are silent carriers of the gene, which, by some estimates, accounts for up to 20 percent of all breast cancers diagnosed annually. When everything is taken into account, **reducing exposure** to medical radiation such as unnecessary mammograms **would likely reduce mortality rates**.

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Another free-thinking medical doctor whom I respect is Allan Spreen, M.D. Dr. Spreen received his medical degree in 1982 and established a nutrition-therapy practice in Jacksonville, Fla. to offer therapeutic nutrition alternatives to patients who were struggling with conventional drug treatments. In 1996, the Atlanta Games led Dr. Spreen -- also an Olympic and U.S. National Diving Team coach -- to close his Florida office practice and move to Arizona to coach his team to success. For over a decade, Dr. Spreen has worked to spread his nutrition know-how to a wider audience through writing, speaking, and consulting. He has helped spread the truth about natural medicine and expose common medical myths through his book **Nutritionally Incorrect - Why the American Diet Is Dangerous & How to Defend Yourself**. Dr. Spreen is also known for his **To Your Health** newsletter.

During his days of pathology residency, it wasn't unusual for him to discover in his microscope a track of cancer cells extending out from the main tumor in a straight line. He came to find out that these tracks of cancer cells were actually from previous needle biopsies! Although most doctors would probably poo-poo the assertion, Dr. Spreen insists that

biopsies can actually disturb a tumor on a molecular level, pulling cancer cells into healthy breast tissue.

He has contended for years that mammograms could do the very same thing. Because mammograms create such intense pressure to the breast tissue, and because of the radiation showered on the breast, he has insisted that it is possible that cancer cells could become dislodged.

A new study published in the **Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)** seems to raise the possibility that he may have been right. Researchers in Norway studied 119,472 women (age 50 to 64) between 1996 and 2001 as part of a national breast screening program. These women were given a mammogram three times over a six year period.

Another control group of women (109,784 of the same age range) were followed over another six year period. These women did not receive bi-annual mammograms. Instead, they received a single screening mammogram at the end of the six year period.

The results were very revealing. Believe it or not...

Cancer rates were **22 percent higher** among the women given regular mammograms! Age wasn't much of a factor, because at every age, the group of women who received regular mammograms had a greater chance of having breast cancer. After studying the report, and based on his own experience, Dr. Spreen is of the opinion that there is a strong likelihood that the mammogram, itself, actually increased the rate of breast cancer?

The report went on to say, 'Many clinicians may be skeptical of the idea that the excess incidence of cancer would be associated with repeated mammography procedures, and the whole idea would be shocking to regular old MDs.' Remember, they are the ones who write orders everyday for their patients to get another mammogram, even though some data suggests that every mammogram raises a woman's breast cancer risk by 1%. Over a lifetime, annual mammograms could raise a woman's risk by 30-40%!)

Dr. Spreen cautions, "Now, don't get me wrong. It's not that I think

women shouldn't get screened for breast cancer. There's no doubt early detection boosts a woman's survival rate. **But there's a much better, safer, and more accurate alternative out there."**

He's referring to breast thermography, a noninvasive test that uses infrared light to detect excess estrogen in the breast, the single greatest factor in the development of breast cancer (especially in young women under 50). If a woman's thermogram suggests a progesterone deficiency (estrogen dominance), she can look for ways to balance her hormones and prevent cancer from developing. In fact, because these tests measure hormone levels, they can actually help a woman stop cancer from ever developing.

In the first part of an in-depth article entitled, **Beyond Mammography**, Dr. Len Saputo, MD, explores the latest findings on the effectiveness and shortcomings of various detection methods used by the mainstream medical community, including mammography, clinical breast exams, ultrasound, and to a lesser extent, magnetic resonance imaging (MRIs) and PET scans, and breast thermography. Dr. Saputo is a graduate of Duke University Medical School, and is the Founder and Director of the Health Medicine Forum, which has hosted and moderated over 350 events. He's also the Co-founder and Medical Director of the Health Medicine Institute and Health Medicine Center, and runs a private practice in Internal Medicine and Health Medicine.

In his article, he points out that Breast thermography has been around since the 1960s. Early infrared scanners were not very sensitive, and were insufficiently tested before being put into clinical practice, resulting in misdiagnosed cases. However, modern-day breast thermography which utilizes a heat-sensing scanner to detect variations in the temperature of the breast tissue, boasts vastly improved technology and more extensive scientific clinical research. In fact, the article references data from major peer review journals and research on more than 300,000 women who have been tested using the technology. In addition to the successes in detecting breast cancer with greater accuracy than other methods, breast thermography technology is slowly gaining ground among more progressive practitioners.

According to Dr. Spreen, from published data he's seen, thermograms can warn a women of potential cancer up to 10 years before the typical

mammogram, which can only identify actual cancer tumors that have reached a certain size. Additionally, according to other data, thermograms are **90% effective** in identifying breast cancer cells, compared to mammogram's claims of 60% effectiveness in women under age 50. When it comes to preventing the disease before it takes hold, the breast thermogram appears to be a much more valuable tool.

The problem is ... there aren't a lot of places in the U.S. that offer thermograms, for very explicit reasons. Thermograms are cheap, and mammography is a billion dollar industry. Plus, what would they do with all the very expensive mammography equipment (not to mention all the highly trained techs)? And what about all the unnecessary biopsies that keep surgeons in business? As usual, follow the money!

In any case, make sure next time you or a loved one sees their gynecologist, ask about thermography as an alternative for the run-of-the-mill mammogram. If your doctor doesn't have a clue, or appears disinterested, here's a link that could assist you in finding a qualified doctor in your area who offers thermography.

<http://www.breastthermography.com/find-a-center.htm>

If there's not one in your area, make sure to put the pressure on your gynecologist to check it out.