Breast Cancer, Unnecessary Chemotherapy, and Invasive Procedures for Women

Is it easier to prescribe exhausting, and ineffective medications than it is to look for actual disease prevention and treatment? The answer is yes, and sixty percent of women with breast cancer are paying the price for that complacency with unnecessary chemotherapy.

A recent study released in the New England Journal of Medicine examined outcomes from two different breast cancer treatments: hormone therapy, and chemotherapy. After nine years of following patients, researchers found that the results were indistinguishable. It didn't matter what treatment they received – nine out of ten women survived. So why do we continue with chemotherapy?

Do the ends justify the means?

Chemotherapy is our default medical standard of care for cancer. While it can eliminate the immediate threat, it's more problematic than helpful. The cancer is gone, but many women are left crippled in another way. The immune system is a shell of what it once was, leaving the body open to all manner of infections and other health conditions. According to Otis Brawley, chief medical and scientific officer for the American Cancer Society,

> *I have lost three patients over the last 25 years because they got leukemia from their chemo…I have lost patients who got congestive heart failure because of their chemo, and I have seen patients who get 'chemo brain' and have difficulty concentrating for the rest of their lives."*

The other, less invasive treatment option presented in this article isn't perfect. Endocrine therapy, which inhibits the body's ability to produce estrogen, can result in symptoms of early menopause, joint pain, and weight loss. But we didn't have that option until recently. Why not? Is chemotherapy so effective that medicine should have stopped looking for solutions?

Recommended: *How to Detox From Plastics and Other Endocrine Disruptors*

It's a Pattern

The practice of applying unnecessarily invasive treatments to an entire gender is not a new one in the United States. The World Health Organization has advocated for a c-section rate of 10-15% for over 30 years. Yet the U.S. is frequently cited for rates of more than double that. C-sections are among the most performed surgeries in the U.S., yet mothers who fight for a different outcome are constantly told that "the most important thing is a healthy baby." Yes, this is true, but that should not be a reason to discourage informed women trying to minimize the physiological fallout from pregnancy. There is a reason the percentage of expectant mothers who find it necessary to hire a doula when giving birth has doubled in a six-year period. Having an advocate is more important than ever.

Me Too

Studies have found that doctors are less likely to listen to or take the concerns of female patients seriously, sometimes describing their pain as emotional or psychogenic. Yet that lack of engagement can lead to treating all women with one size all procedures that aren't always necessary. It also causes many women years of frustration, searching for someone who will take their concerns seriously.

Recommended: *Best Supplements To Kill Candida and Everything Else You Ever Wanted To Know About Fungal Infections*

It’s ironic that the alternative treatment to chemotherapy examined in this study reduces the amount estrogen in the body, literally suppressing female hormones. Women are taught to avoid rocking the boat, but speaking up or voting with your dollar and finding someone who will listen can be the thing that saves you from potential long-lasting health issues.

Related:

- *How to Detoxify From Chemotherapy and Repair the Body*
- *Dying to Cut – Unnecessary Surgeries You May Want to Avoid, and Why*
- *Top 5 Hospital Procedures That Are Doing More Harm Than Good*

Sources:

- *Good News for Women With Breast Cancer: Many Don’t Need Chemo* – NY Times
- *Adjuvant Chemotherapy Guided by a 21-Gene Expression Assay in Breast Cancer* – New England Journal of Medicine
- *Thousands of women will avoid chemo thanks to a study funded by the breast cancer stamp* – Vox
- *Sky-high C-section rates in the US don’t translate to better birth outcomes* – StatNews
- *Is There A Gender Bias Against Female Pain Patients?* – Huffington Post