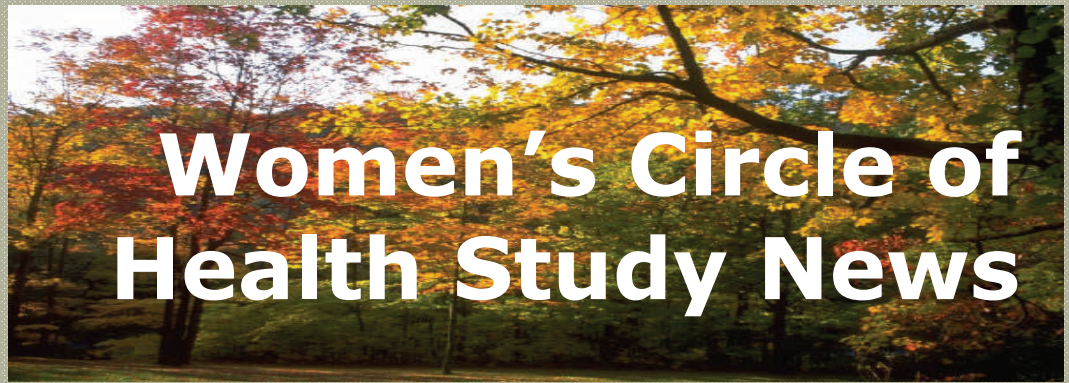




Mount Sinai School of Medicine ♦ Cancer Institute of New Jersey

New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services ♦ Roswell Park Cancer Institute



Women's Circle of Health Study going strong.

Six years ago, we began a long-term research study, the Women's Circle of Health Study (WCHS), in New York City, to look at the reasons why some women get breast cancer and others don't. We are trying to understand why African-

American women are more likely to get breast cancer when they are younger (before age 40) and why they are more often diagnosed with tumors that are not as easy to cure. As you probably remember, we asked a lot of questions about exercise, diet,

"2,765 African American and Caucasian women have generously given their time to this study"

weight, family history of cancer and emotional feelings. We also took a blood sample or asked you to provide saliva so that we

could look at how common differences in how people's bodies respond to different foods and other factors, that is determined by their genes, may affect risk of breast cancer. We were also able to get medical records and cancer tissue from women with breast cancer who agreed. We can use this extra information to look more closely at the kind of

cancer cells that people with breast cancer have. We started enrolling in New York City but then started a second area for people to join the study in New Jersey. Up until May of this year people were joining the WCHS in both New York City and New Jersey. Now, the study is happening only in New Jersey.

So far we are very happy to report that 2,765 African-American and Caucasian women of all ages have generously given their time to be interviewed for this study and given us a saliva or a blood sample.

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What does this study mean for breast cancer?

Women are actively enrolling in the study, completing interviews and donating samples. The first information from this study is going to appear in a medical cancer journal called the *Journal of Oncology* and will describe the study and the differences between the African-American and Caucasian women with and without cancer. From the information that we have gotten so far, we have begun to see that things such as body weight, age at first menstrual period, the number of children a woman has had and their age at first pregnancy are different between African-American and Caucasian

women with breast cancer. We also know that the type of cancer cells, whether or not they express the *receptor status*, and the grade (how quickly the tumor is able to grow) is also different between African-American and Caucasian women with cancer. The study has also shown that Caucasian women are more likely to have had their breast cancer diagnosed through having a mammogram. As we increase the size of the study (we are planning to double the size of the study we have now), we will be able to make comparisons between women with breast cancer and women without, and

try to better understand why some people get cancer while others do not, and why some women get cancers that are harder to cure. As the study continues and more women join, we hope to be able to explain better what some of these findings might mean for women and how better to prevent breast cancer and better treat it. This is very exciting for cancer research as we continue to move forward with this study for at least one more year. We will certainly update you on findings from this study; we would not have been able to do it without you.

Meet the Team...



Christine Ambrosone, PhD

Dr. Ambrosone is Professor of Oncology and Chair of the Department of Cancer Prevention and Control at Roswell Park Cancer Institute (RPCI) in Buffalo, New York and the Principal Investigator for the Women's Circle of Health Study. She serves as senior editor for the journal *Cancer Research*, and is on the Board of Scientific Advisors to the Director of the National Cancer Institute (NCI), as well as a number of other Advisory Boards. Dr. Ambrosone's research focuses on the role of genes as they interact with health and pregnancy factors, diet and harmful environment factors in causing cancer. She is the author or co-author of more than 130 published articles in this field as well as the author of several book chapters. Dr. Ambrosone is passionate about finding the underlying risk factors in the development of breast cancer, and especially for those cancers that are more difficult to cure.



Dana H. Bovbjerg, PhD

Dr. Bovbjerg is Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine and Director of the Biobehavioral Medicine Program at the University of Pittsburgh Cancer Institute and a Principal Investigator for the Women's Circle of Health Study. He has served as an editor for *The Annals of Behavioral Medicine* and on the editorial boards of *Brain, Behavior and Immunity*, *Health Psychology* and *Psychosomatic Medicine*. Elected a member of the Academy of Behavioral Medicine Research and a fellow in the Society of Behavioral medicine. Dr. Bovbjerg's research focuses on the bio-behavioral factors in cancer and breast cancer risk. He also studies genetic testing for breast cancer and cancer screening behaviors and the emotional, cognitive and behavioral consequences of cancer treatment. Dr. Bovbjerg is interested in the underlying psychological stresses that influence breast cancer in the Women's Circle of Health Study as well as the effects of screening and treatment.



Lina Jandorf, MS

Ms. Jandorf is Associate Professor and the Director of Cancer Community Outreach in the Division of Cancer Prevention and Control, at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine in East Harlem, NY., and the NYC Women's Circle of Health Site Principal Investigator. Ms. Jandorf formed the East Harlem Partnership for Cancer Awareness, a coalition of hospitals, community health centers, and in addition, the Witness Project© of Harlem, a faith-based breast and cervical education program targeting African American women and *Esperanza y Vida*, a faith-based breast and cervical education program for Latino families have been established. Ms. Jandorf serves on the Board of Advisors for the Upper Manhattan office of the American Cancer Society and is an active member of New York State's Cancer Consortium. Ms. Jandorf's research is focused on cancer screening programs to medically underserved communities and recruiting minority residents into research efforts. She is currently researching ways to increase colorectal screening among minorities.



Elisa Bandera, MD, PhD

Dr. Bandera is Associate Professor of Epidemiology at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey's Cancer Institute of New Jersey, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and the School of Public Health, and a member of the graduate faculty at Rutgers University's Department of Nutritional Sciences and the NJ Site Principal Investigator for the Women's Circle of Health Study. Dr. Bandera serves as Vice Chair of the Advisory Group for Cancer Prevention and Control of the New Jersey Commission on Cancer Research, and leads the Nutrition and Physical Activity Workgroup of the New Jersey Task Force on Cancer Prevention, Early Detection, and Treatment. Dr. Bandera has served on several grant review panels, for the American Institute for Cancer Research Grant Review Panel and the World Cancer Research Fund International RFA on Biomarkers Research Panel. Dr. Bandera's research focuses on the role that dietary factors play on breast, ovary and endometrial cancer. Dr. Bandera is also currently leading The Jersey Girl Study, looking at the factors influencing the onset of puberty in girls.



Women's Circle of Health Study staff from The Cancer Institute of New Jersey. From left: Lindsay Lefenfeld, Tara DeSiano, Dr. Elisa Bandera, Stella Chang, Thanusha Puvananayagam, Jean Williams and Charo Valdez.

The staff at Mount Sinai School of Medicine conducted interviews with participants throughout Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens and the Bronx. Currently recruitment and interviews are being conducted only in New Jersey in the counties of Passaic, Bergen, Hudson, Essex, Union, Middlesex and Mercer.

Study staff work out of The Cancer Institute of New Jersey and travel to conduct in-home interviews for this project.

On the move, interviewers Charo, Tara, Stella and Lindsay get ready for a day of interviewing.



The most important picture you may ever take.

It is easy to put off going to the doctor, especially if you are feeling well. It is even easier putting off getting a mammogram, but there is nothing more important to your health than prevention and early detection. Early detection in breast cancer means the opportunity to beat it. The Center for Disease Control estimates the number of women receiving a mammogram in the US at 65%, with those numbers steadily going down. While the technology and to some, the experience, is far from perfect, mammography is one of the

best tools women have to detect breast problems early, when they are most treatable. With this in mind, it is something you cannot let yourself or your friends and family put off; especially if you have been previously diagnosed with breast cancer, or have a family history. The American Cancer Society recommends that women 40 years and older should have a screening mammogram yearly. If you have a history of breast cancer yourself or in your family, these recommendations may vary, requiring earlier or more frequent exams.

The National Breast and Cervical Early Detection Program provides access to critical breast and cervical screening services for low income women in the United States offering free breast and cervical cancer screening. To find a location in your area log onto:

<http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/cancercontacts/nbcedp/contacts.asp>

Or call: 1-800-232-4636.

Remember, mammography is a supporting player in good breast health, not the only role. Putting efforts on eating good foods, exercise, and a healthy lifestyle is very important in maintaining well being.

"I try to schedule my mammogram on the same day as my hair appointment. This way I feel that it's a day to just take care of me."

-Janet M.



Baring "Witness" about the triumph over breast and cervical cancer.

The Witness Project® is a health education program for African-American women in churches and community centers across the country. It features a group of African-American women who each "Witness" about her triumph over breast or cervical cancer. Together, they preach the good news that cancer doesn't have to be an automatic death sentence. The key is to catch it early and get it treated.

In addition, the instructors teach women about breast and cervical cancer and the risk factors for these diseases. They answer questions about Pap test (tests to find cervical cancer) and mammograms. Women learn where they can have these tests done at low, or in some cases, no cost, in their community.

The Witness Project® has 25 sites located in 22 states nationwide.

An implementation package for this award winning program is available to individuals or groups who were interested in starting a project in their community. With these materials, you can establish a project that will save lives.

The project offers more than just hope though, it also teaches women some simple things that they can do in their own lives to protect themselves against breast and cervical cancer; for example, Monthly Self Exam, Clinical Breast Exam and Annual Mammogram. Trained health instructors at each program use special breast models to show the audience how they can check themselves for signs of breast cancer. Audience members then practice what they've learned by examining and finding lumps in special breast models. There is currently an active Witness Project in New York City that is always looking for volunteers. If interested,

please call Terri Deans-McFarlane at 212-659-5517. For more information about a Witness Project in areas outside of NYC call: National Witness Project 716-845-1394.



Witness Project volunteers



"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has".

-Margaret Mead

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We are on the Web!

http://cinjweb.umdnj.edu/bandera/breast_study.htm

"By participating in this study, you know that you are helping other women in your community".



Spotlight on the Cure

Susan G. Komen for the Cure's vision is a "world without breast cancer". What began as a promise between two sisters Nancy Brinker to her sister Susan G. Komen, who died from breast cancer, has become one of the world's largest and most progressive grassroots network breast cancer organizations. Survivors and activists are joined together in fighting to cure breast cancer on every level. They are committed to research, prevention and patient support, and raise millions of dollars a year to fight the fight, through fundraising efforts that circle the globe. To learn more about the many activities of this foundation or how to become involved go to:
<http://ww5.komen.org/>



The Avon Foundation Breast Cancer Crusade has for over a decade, responded to the needs of women by raising funds and "awareness for advancing access to care and finding a cure for breast cancer". The Avon Breast Cancer Crusade has raised and awarded hundreds of millions of dollars worldwide for awareness, education, screening and diagnosis of breast cancer. The foundation also offers an unwavering commitment to scientific research and support services for breast cancer patients around the world. To learn more about the Avon foundation's crusade for breast cancer, their activities and how to become involved, go to:
<http://www.avoncompany.com/women/>

Dream
I look to the sky and what do I see?
A castle a rainbow, and dreams for me,
An end to this battle that I must fight,
To rid my feelings of depression and fright,
An end to cancer is not far away,
It will be here someday...someday. -Anonymous

