

## ABC Link Confirmed in Chinese Meta-Analysis *by Joel Brind, PhD*

In February, 2014 a systematic review and meta-analysis of the abortion-breast cancer link (ABC link) was published in the prestigious international journal *Cancer Causes and Control*. Having first appeared on line in November of last year, the study by Yubei Huang et. al of the Tianjin Medical University in China reviewed and compiled the results of 36 studies from mainland China dating back as far as 1988. Reporting an overall, statistically significant risk increase of 44% (odds ratio or OR = 1.44) for women who've had one or more induced abortions, the Huang study confirmed the results I and my co-authors from Penn State Medical College had reported in 1996 in the *British Medical Association's epidemiology journal*<sup>1</sup> (OR = 1.3).

As important as the confirmation of the overall ABC link is, the Huang study was particularly important in at least four other ways:

1) It confirmed the link in a completely different population in a different time frame, as our original 1996 meta-analysis compiled worldwide studies between 1957 and 1996.

2) It showed a clear dose effect, i.e., women with two or more abortions showed a risk increase of 76%, and those with three or more abortions showed a risk increase of 89%. In epidemiology, when increased

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## 4th Annual BCPI Golf Classic Set for June 6, 2014 at the Beautiful Cranbury Golf Club

We had another great golf outing in 2013. The weather was beautiful, the fairways were manicured, the food was delicious, but most enjoyable of all was hearing the laughter and great stories following our round of golf.

It was a great day! We had fun and raised money for the awesome work done at BCPI. We want to thank everyone who had a hand in making the 2013 outing such a great success...

**Please join us at the Cranbury Golf Club again this year!**

Feel free to call Bob Gerling, Golf Chairman, at 908-208-5161 for information about how you can help make the **Fourth Annual BCPI Golf Classic** another success.

A copy of the 2014 Golf brochure with sponsorship and player registration forms is available for download on the BCPI website.



## This Year's Golf Classic Honors Board Member by Robert Gerling



JoAnn Gerling

My wife JoAnn and I have long been supporters of BCPI and the work being done these many years to shine a light on the avoidable risks of breast cancer for our wives and daughters. Every year BCPI chooses a woman to honor at the Golf Classic in a special way. As nice as it is to be honored, it's not a list on which any woman hopes to find her name... This past year, however, JoAnn was added to the list. She is this year's 2014 Honoree.

JoAnn received a call from Dr. Lanfranchi two days after Christmas, 2012; a day after her biopsy. The news was nothing we expected, certainly nothing we wanted to hear. Angela had to tell her friend her biopsy indicated triple negative breast cancer. Despite having no identifiable risk factors (save being a woman and getting older) and having done many things known to lower risk like breast feeding, JoAnn's

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## Supreme Court Hears Oral Arguments of BCPI Amicus Brief

Last year BCPI president, Dr. Angela Lanfranchi, assisted attorneys for two legal organizations by providing the medical facts that the Breast Cancer Prevention Institute has provided to the public and medical community since is founding 15 years ago. Those facts were the basis of an amicus brief that was filed on behalf of several US businesses in the Federal Circuit Courts of Appeal. Those businesses objected to the Obamacare (Affordable Care Act) mandate that they must give employees health insurance that provided no cost oral contraceptives and abortifacient drugs. One case from the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia was upheld (meaning the business was granted their appeal to be excluded from the mandate) and so far our Federal government did not try to bring it to the Supreme Court to overturn the Appeal Court's ruling.



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## BCPI Amicus Brief Continues through the Federal Court System

In its November 1, 2013 decision, the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia upheld the appeal of the Gilardi brothers, owners of two corporations, who objected to the Federal mandate of the Affordable Care Act requiring them to supply insurance paying for hormonal contraceptives, abortifacient drugs and abortions for their employees. They are Catholic and objected to the mandate on the grounds of religious freedom. BCPI's brief supported their appeal on the grounds that these drugs are harmful to women and therefore the Federal Government hasn't shown that Obamacare is necessary to protect women's health but actually harms women.

In the decision, which is available online on the BCPI web site, Justice Brown, writing the majority decision, cited the Amicus Brief of the Breast Cancer Prevention Institute as showing that the Federal Government did not make a convincing case that the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) was necessary for the protection of women's health given the known risk of oral contraceptives.

## BCPI IS 15 YEARS OLD MAY 2014 !!!

The Board of Directors of the Breast Cancer Prevention Institute want to thank all of our supporters who have so generously donated to our Institute over these many years with their treasure, time and talent since 1999. We are enormously grateful for your continued support and kind words of encouragement that have sustained us. We will continue to provide the most up to date and accurate information on the ways that a woman can lower her risk of breast cancer, thereby empowering her to make healthy choices.



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## ABC Link Confirmed

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exposure to the putative risk factor results in a higher risk increase, the factor (abortion in this case) is more likely to be an actual cause of the disease in question (breast cancer in this case).

3) It confirmed our explanation of the lack of association in certain studies where the prevalence of induced abortion is very high, via their meta-regression analysis. In 2004, Vern Chinchilli of Penn State Medical College and I published a detailed letter in the *British Medical Journal* about two then recent studies<sup>2,3</sup> on women from Shanghai which did not show a significant ABC link. We argued that the link was essentially masked by the fact that the prevalence of abortion was so high (over 50% in one study; over 60% in the other), that the women in the comparison group (i.e., those with no abortions) were no longer typical women of the population. Rather, they were women who delayed having children until a later age, thus representing a high risk sub-group. Huang et al. presented our arguments (with attribution), to explain the results of their meta-regression analysis of all the Chinese studies, which analysis showed the ABC link shrinking as the prevalence of abortion increased in the general healthy population. This effect of high abortion prevalence not only explains the pattern of abortion and breast cancer in Chinese studies, but also anomalous significant decreases in risk observed with abortion in two studies from Serbia, one from 1979 and one just published in 2013. The former reported a prevalence of induced abortion of 75% and the latter, a prevalence of 89%. East or West, when most of the women in a given population have had at least one abortion, abortion's ill effects disappear, and it even begins to look beneficial. Why? Because the only women who have not had an abortion would be the ones who were less fertile and had fewer children and started having them at a later age, i.e., a sub-group known to be at higher risk of breast cancer.

4) It showed the usefulness of including the data for abortion as a whole (i.e., induced and spontaneous), at least in China, where induced abortion is by far the most common form of abortion. We have always excluded studies which reported results for abortion, but that did not distinguish between induced and spontaneous abortion. That's because it is known that spontaneous abortion (miscarriage) generally does not increase breast cancer risk. In the Huang study, the authors showed that about 90% of reported abortions are induced. Then, they separately pooled the results of studies that did report separately on induced abortions (16 studies) and those that only reported induced and spontaneous abortions combined. They found an overall risk increase with induced abortions of 49%, whereas the risk increase with undifferentiated abortions was found to be 41%; i.e., slightly but insignificantly lower. Thus, they verified the validity of studies that report only on induced and spontaneous abortions combined, to contribute to the evidence for the ABC link.

Just think, with about 600 million women in China alone, an increase in lifetime breast cancer risk of just 1% (conservatively, from 2% to 3%), and an abortion prevalence of 50%, that comes out to 3 million women currently alive, who can be expected to get breast cancer because they had one or more abortions, with over a million dying from the disease.

<sup>1</sup>Brind J, Chinchilli VM. Breast cancer and induced abortions in China. *Br J Cancer* 2004;90:2244-46 (letter).

<sup>2</sup>Sanderson M, Shu X-O, Fan J, et al. Abortion history and breast cancer risk: Results from the Shanghai Breast Cancer Study. *Int J Cancer* 2001;92:899-905.

<sup>3</sup>Ye Z, Gao DL, Qin Q, et al. Breast cancer in relation to induced abortions in a cohort of Chinese women. *Br J Cancer* 2002;87:977-81.

### REMINDER!

Don't forget to check out our website for new additions and updates.

[www.bcpinstitute.org](http://www.bcpinstitute.org)

If you move or change your mailing or email address, if you receive multiple copies of the BCPI Report, or if you wish to be removed from our mailing list, please send us an email to let us know. It helps us save on postage costs for our mailing when we have up-to-date information.

Email: [info@bcpinstitute.org](mailto:info@bcpinstitute.org)

You can also return the donation card to us with your new address information. Be sure to check the box letting us know the information is new.

## A Brief Note from the President...

After many years of research, a new book, "Complications," published by The deVeber Institute for Bioethics and Social Research in Toronto, Canada is available. I am the author of a 34-page chapter on the ABC Link. The entire Chapter 7 is available online on the BCPI web site as a resource to you. I hope you will find it an interesting read as it also covers the sociologic and political aspects of the Link. **We have revamped our web site** to make it more user friendly and able to keep up with the constant stream of new data and studies.

**We have updated some of our fact sheets** such as the epidemiologic studies on the ABC link which seem to be coming out at a fast and furious pace. **On March 17<sup>th</sup>, Dr Brind and I were well received** at the Endeavour Forum's event at the United Nations' 58<sup>th</sup> annual Commission on the Status of Women Conference by an international audience from the continents of Europe, Africa, Australia, Asia, North and Latin America. They took home BCPI materials and have already requested more. **We also have more resources available in Spanish** on our web site.



Angela Lanfranchi, MD

## Supreme Court Hears Oral Arguments...

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However two cases from the Tenth and Third Federal Circuits were granted review by the Justices of the United States Supreme Court, viz. Kathleen Sebelius v. Hobby Lobby Stores and Conestoga Wood Specialties.

Attorney Dorinda C. Bordlee of the Bioethics Defense Fund gave oral arguments before the US Supreme Court Justices on March 25, 2014. As the brief states:

"Amici have an interest in bringing this Court's attention to the fact that, in promulgating the HHS Mandate, the Government disregarded the large body of relevant, widely available, scientifically sound, scholarly research of significantly increased health risks arising from the use of hormonal contraceptive and abortifacient drugs. For this reason, the Government cannot demonstrate that application of the HHS Mandate to a religiously objecting employer meets the RFRA requirement that it be "in furtherance of a compelling governmental interest" – particularly its asserted interest in expanding access to "preventive" health services. Indeed, the HHS Mandate fails the most important test of showing a compelling interest in preventive medicine: it increases risk of serious disease instead of decreasing it."

The decision is expected in June 2014 before the court recesses.

## JoAnn Gerling Honored at Golf Classic...

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breast cancer illustrates that **all** women are at risk for breast cancer.

We are not unfamiliar with the devastating effects cancer can have on individuals and families. JoAnn lost two very dear friends to cancer within a year of her own diagnosis. She has always been a compassionate and faithful friend and she was there for her friends every step of their painful journey. She still keeps in contact with their husbands and children.

She was scared when she was told she had breast cancer, but her greatest concern was for our children...and for me. When I came home from work shortly after Angela called her with the bad news, her first words to me was, "sorry Hon."

We have four wonderful children (5 if you include me), three great sons-in-law, and witnessed all the births of our ten beautiful grandchildren. She helped all our girls breastfeed their children and has helped countless others with breastfeeding for over 40 years as a La Leche leader and lactation consultant, as well.

Our family was devastated by the news of JoAnn's cancer. It was a rough year for her and our children.

JoAnn finished her surgery, radiation and chemo treatment just a few weeks ago. Her strength is returning, her hair...well, her hair will grow back.