

INTERNATIONAL BUZZ and the ABC LINK How a Canadian MP's Press Release on His Vindication Caused Canadian Consternation

By Dr. Angela Lanfranchi

As Dr. Brind wrote in our October 2009 BCPI Report, a Turkish study had found abortion to be a risk factor for breast cancer. This was reported in a very matter of fact way. The study stated that as past studies had done, these Turkish researchers had also found that induced abortion was a statistically significant risk factor for breast cancer.

In addition to that study, there were two other studies published in 2009 that also matter of factly listed induced abortion as a risk factor for breast cancer. One was from China, published in Medical Oncology by Xing and Li in September 2009. The authors were looking at which reproductive risk factors were associated with the different sub types of breast cancer. They found induced abortion increased breast cancer risk by 26% for cancers which had estrogen and progesterone receptors and were Her2/neu positive. This increase was a statistically significant. Her2/neu positive cancers are known to be more aggressive (more likely to become metastatic) and have a higher chance of relapse (coming back after treatment) than Her2/neu negative cancers.

However, the study which created the most "buzz" in the popular press was the one published in April 2009 in the journal Cancer, Epidemiology, Biomarkers and Prevention. In the section under "Results" the authors stated: "In analyses of all 897 breast cancer cases (subtypes combined), the multivariate-adjusted odds ratios for examined risk factors were consistent with the effects observed in previous studies (Table 1). Specifically, older age, family history of breast cancer, earlier menarche, age, **induced abortion**, and oral contraceptive use were associated with an increased risk for breast cancer." (**bold added**) Yet it wasn't these findings that created the "buzz."

The "buzz" was caused by the realization that one of the authors of the paper was Louise A. Brinton, who is in the Division of Cancer Epidemiology and Genetics at the National Cancer Institute. This was the same Louise Brinton who was the leader of the NCI's 2003 Workshop on Early Reproductive Events and Breast Cancer Risk, the workshop that had concluded that there was soooooo NOT a link between abortion and breast

(Continued on page 2)

BCPI Gets National Kudos in 2009

BCPI received nationwide kudos this past Thanksgiving Day. On November 26, Ken Blackwell, senior fellow at Family Research Council in Washington DC and a columnist for townhall.com praised BCPI in his piece titled *Politicizing Medicine, Medicalizing Politics*. He started his column with, "I'm not a doctor. I don't even play one on TV." He then went on to criticize another reporter who had criti-

(Continued on page 2)

A Note from a Board Member

Jeanette Joyce has been a board member since 2002. She is a breast cancer survivor and an expert in mammography.

By Jeanette Joyce, BFA, RT(R)(M)

Women hate having mammograms! So when I reveal to someone that I am a mammography technologist, most women cringe and fold their arms over their chests. That's right ... I have been squeezing breasts for the past 18 years and I feel blessed, ex-



Jeanette Joyce,
BFA, RT(R)(M)

(Continued on
page 2)

Lactation Consultant Elected Newest BCPI Board Member



Jo Ann Gerling, RLC, IBCLC

In October 2009 at a BCPI Board meeting, Jo Ann Gerling was unanimously elected its newest member.

Jo Ann Gerling first started helping breastfeeding mothers in 1972 as a certified La Leche League Leader. She became board certified as a lactation consultant in 1986. She founded the lactation program at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in New Brunswick, NJ in 1986, where she worked for 11 years. Jo Ann currently is the Director of Lactation services at Beth Israel Medical Center in

New York City, and has served in this capacity for over 12 years. She teaches antepartum and post-partum breastfeeding classes, and offers in-services for physicians and staff. She also maintains a private practice in New Jersey, making home visits to breastfeeding mothers.

OOPS—WE DID IT AGAIN !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

After 10 years at one address in Poughkeepsie, NY, with the change in leadership at BCPI, we closed our NY office and opened in NJ where its new president, Dr Angela Lanfranchi practices breast surgery.

BCPI's mailing address has again changed from Bound Brook, NJ to a new address in Somerville, NJ.

Please address all BCPI correspondence and donations to:

Dr. Angela Lanfranchi
Breast Cancer Prevention Institute
30 Rehill Avenue, Suite 3400
Somerville, NJ 08876 USA

Or email us at info@bcpinstitute.org



INTERNATIONAL BUZZ and the ABC LINK...

(Continued from page 1)

cancer that there should not be any more studies done on the subject. The problem is that scientists know that induced abortion is an important "variable" to consider when doing studies which concern breast cancer risk, and to "control" for these variables they must consider them in their results. If they don't other scientists will conclude they didn't do a good job in their study and criticize them in a letter to the editor just in case the study was allowed to be published by that journal's editorial review board. The review board tries to assure that only scientifically accurate studies are published. Quite a conundrum. So when Canadian MP, Maurice Vellacott, issued a press release saying he had been vindicated for asking me in 2007 to give a talk on Parliament Hill on the subject of the ABC Link, (for which he was greatly criticized) a Canadian press reporter and blogger became skeptical and e-mailed the NCI. The reporter asked Dr. Brinton to comment so she could explain the discrepancy of what she wrote in the results of

her 2009 study about breast cancer risk and induced abortion and the conclusion of the NCI workshop she led. Her requests went unanswered by Dr Brinton.

Although Louise Brinton would not comment, a spokesman did refer the reporter to the web site NCI posted after the 2003 workshop which had not been updated since it was posted in 2003. This created doubt in the reporter's mind which caused her to write that "And Mr. Vellacott may be right." A maelstrom ensued in various blogs.

Gloria Steinum once said: "The truth will set you free. But first it will piss you off." I think Gloria's right about how some women feel when it concerns information about the ABC Link and oral contraceptives. But at least when the truth is more widely known, it will free some women from those risks and give all women their right to know what scientists already know, the truth about what affects their breast cancer risk. Without the truth there can be no informed consent.

BCPI Gets National Kudos in 2009

(Continued from page 1)

cized HHS head Sibelius for overriding a government task force that had recommended **not** screening women in their 40s for breast cancer. What was so gratifying was that after he criticized Obama's medical advisor Z. Emmanuel, he stated, "One thing *not* mentioned in this week's battle over early detection for breast cancer is the abortion-breast cancer connection." He went on to praise BCPI and Drs. Brind and Lanfranchi for writing a very useful booklet on prevention! He then listed 8 of the risk reduction strategies we have in Chapter 16. And he included our web address! And toll-free number! You can find the full archived article at

http://townhall.com/columnists/KenBlackwell/2009/11/26/politicizing_medicine,_medicalizing_politics.

Drs. Brind and Lanfranchi also received 2009 NJ Eagle Forum awards for their work on the ABC Link and hope to present their work at a 2010 Eagle Forum Conference.

A Note from a Board Member

(Continued from page 1)

tremely blessed, to be in this position. I also began teaching aspiring radiographers the art of mammography 10 years ago.

Now I travel across the country teaching everything from breast anatomy & physiology to breast pathology & risk factors to treatment options & breast reconstruction. I even conduct live workshops so my students will learn the meaning of ADEQUATE breast compression. There's no reason to squeeze more than necessary. As I explain, it'll just make your patient mad and she won't return next year! And how about all those ladies with breast implants? We have special techniques for imaging their breasts so we do not compromise the integrity of the implant. For 2 full days, I provide my students with more information about their breasts than they have probably heard in their lifetime. And sometimes we laugh and other times we cry.

With breast cancer affecting 1 in 8

women, it seems that the majority of us know of someone who has been diagnosed. What was once a disease of old ladies is now being diagnosed more often in 30-something and 40-something year old women. And so often their response is, "How could this happen? There's no breast cancer in my family."

I was one of those patients in 1998, diagnosed with breast cancer at the age of 42. As far as I knew, I too had no known risk factors for breast cancer. As I researched further, I discovered some startling information. As much as I did not want to believe it, my lifestyle and reproductive choices may have increased my risk of developing breast cancer. And even more startling was the fact that none of my health care specialists would acknowledge it! I believe women are entitled to informed consent when they are making important decisions.

The mortality rate from breast cancer has been steadily decreasing over the last decade. This decline is a direct reflection on more women receiving annual screening

mammograms beginning at the age of 40 and the great advances that continue to be made in treatment options. Early breast cancer is curable. However, the number of women presenting for mammograms is dropping and we can only guess the reason. The economy? Women losing their health insurance benefits? The remarks from the US Preventive Task Force (shame on you!) discouraging mammograms until the age of 50 and then every 2 years? Saving lives is more important than saving money!

So, as you can see, I am on a mission of sorts. My passion is informing women about the truth. Abortion is one of many risk factors for breast cancer. By empowering women with this knowledge, they can make sensible choices. By knowing they are at an increased risk for breast cancer, they can chose to be more vigilant about Breast Self-Examination (BSE), annual mammography and annual breast exams by their health care provider.

I am a mammography technician and I've had 2 mastectomies. Yet ironically I have to say that breasts are my specialty.