

Absolutely no link between bras and breast cancer

By ACSH Staff — September 5, 2014



[1] You may have heard about the speculation that wearing

a bra can cause breast cancer. Apparently, the theory behind this absurd scare posits that bras (especially underwire bras) hinder the flow of lymphatic fluids, preventing the removal of waste, which results in a toxic buildup that can lead to tumors. Despite the fact that this rumor/conspiracy has previously made its rounds through the lay media and across the Internet, there has been no scientific study to address the issue. Until now.

Epidemiology doctoral student Lu Chen and colleagues of the Division of Public Health Sciences at the prestigious Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle conducted a study to set this rumor straight.

In [their study](#) [2], published today in *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers & Prevention*, the researchers conducted a population-based (case-control) study that assessed bra-wearing histories of over 450 healthy post-menopausal women, and compared those to over 1,000 women diagnosed with breast cancer. Information about the bra-wearing habits of the study participants was obtained through in-person interviews. Chen and her colleagues found no link between bra-wearing and breast cancer. The study also examined other factors: the use of underwire bras, how often bras are worn, the age women start wearing them, and bra size.

Although upon examination, the myth linking breast cancer to wearing bras had no scientific support, the researchers thought it was still important to investigate the claim, especially since a 1991 study suggested that women who did not wear bras had a lower rate of breast cancer. Chen and colleagues pointed out the flaws of this study: The link to breast cancer was, in fact, due to obesity rather than bra-wearing.

Hopefully the results of this study will dissuade women from the now-proven pointless method of forgoing a bra to reduce breast cancer risk and encourage women to take part in more well-established risk reduction methods, like regular physical activity and limiting weight gain.

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[2] <http://cebp.aacrjournals.org/content/early/2014/08/27/1055-9965.EPI-14-0414.abstract?sid=37ec1ff0-7dd9-4352-87d1-e4aa72f0c06f>