

FEW Notes

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From the President...
Reflections & Highlights
By Debbie L. Miller

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Through the advertising events of the Susan B. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, the month of October is widely known as Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Various fundraising activities are available to individuals to support family members, friends, or coworkers diagnosed with breast cancer. The important factor to remember is that both women and men need to receive education about breast cancer. Emphasis for early detection through mammography screening is highlighted in October, but I would like to stress the importance of scheduling yearly mammograms because finding breast cancer at an early stage greatly improves the chances of successful treatment.

The third Friday in October is National Mammography Day. Please be aware that several national organizations will have a list of radiology facilities providing discounted or even free mammogram screenings. Call the American Cancer Society at 1-800-ACS-2345 or the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation at 1-800-IM-AWARE for further details. Let us all continue to pray for a cure.

Another important event is the chapter's October program entitled "Successful Interviewing Techniques" (details are listed below). Various guest speakers from different agencies will provide their personal interviewing tips to assist our members and guests with future career advancement. Please mark your calendars and plan to join us.

NEXT PROGRAM:

OCTOBER 30, 2007

VA Medical Center Learning Resource Center

6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

NEXT BOARD MEETING

NOVEMBER 5, 2007

Holiday Inn Airport

Hispanic Heritage Month: Sept. 15 - Oct. 15

In September 1968, Congress authorized President Lyndon B. Johnson to proclaim National Hispanic Heritage Week, which was observed during the week including Sept. 15 and Sept. 16. The observance was expanded in 1988 to a month-long celebration (Sept. 15 – Oct. 15). America celebrates the culture and traditions of U.S. residents who trace their roots to Spain, Mexico and the Spanish-speaking nations of Central America, South America and the Caribbean. Sept. 15 was chosen as the starting point for the celebration because it is the anniversary of independence of five Latin American countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. In addition, Mexico and Chile celebrate their independence days on Sept. 16 and Sept. 18, respectively.

Life is either a daring adventure or nothing. To keep our faces toward change and behave like free spirits in the presence of fate is strength undefeatable.

Helen Keller

Higher Levels of Immune Cells Linked to Risk of Cancer in Postmenopausal Women

According to results recently published in the *Archives of Internal Medicine*, postmenopausal women with higher levels of white blood cells (a type of immune cell) have a higher risk of developing specific types of cancer and dying from cancer.

Inflammatory and immune system processes are thought to play significant roles in the development of some types of cancers. Levels of white blood cells (WBCs), which can be measured in circulating blood, can be used to indicate certain diseases or infections. Researchers continue to evaluate levels of blood cells as potential “markers” or indicators of risk of disease.

Researchers from 40 medical centers in the United States recently conducted a clinical study to evaluate WBC count and the risk of cancer among postmenopausal women. This study included 143,748 women aged 50 to 79 years who had enrolled in the Women’s Health Initiative (WHI) study. Upon initiation of the trial, no patients had been diagnosed with cancer.

- Women with the highest WBC levels had significantly higher rates of breast, colorectal, endometrial (uterine), and lung cancer compared with women who had the lowest WBC levels.
- Among non-smokers, women with the highest WBC levels had significantly higher rates of breast and endometrial cancers.
- Higher WBC levels were also associated with an increased risk of overall death from cancer.

The researchers concluded that women with higher WBC levels have increased risks of breast, colorectal, endometrial, and lung cancers, as well as an increased risk of overall cancer mortality. Future studies are warranted to further investigate this association.

Reference: Margolis K, Rodabough R, Thomson C, et al. Prospective study of leukocyte count as a predictor of incident breast, colorectal, endometrial, and lung cancer and mortality in postmenopausal women. *Archives of Internal Medicine*. 2007;167:1837-1844.

Top 8 Breast Cancer Risk Myths - Some Common Misconceptions

- 1. Myth:** Antiperspirants cause breast cancer.
Not true. There is no research that proves that the use of antiperspirants can cause breast cancer. Some medical studies have been done on tissue samples from breast cancer patients, and in some cases, the chemical substance parabens was found, both in antiperspirants and in some tumors. But there is no clear link between antiperspirants and the start of breast cancer. Don't toss out your deodorant yet! Read more in an article on urban legends.
- 2. Myth:** If breast cancer isn't in my family, I can't get it.
Not true. Anyone with breast tissue, male or female, is at risk for breast cancer. The risk is higher for women. Add increasing age to having breast tissue, and your risk also increases. If blood relatives have had breast cancer, then you have a bit higher risk than someone with no history of the disease in their family. Check with your doctor and review your family health history, to be on the safe side.
- 3. Myth:** A diagnosis of breast cancer is the same as a death sentence.
Not true. Breast cancer is more accurately detected and treated at an early stage, before it spreads, as compared to 20 and 25 years ago. Now, 80% of women who are diagnosed with breast cancer and who do not have any metastasis (spread of cancer) will survive at least 5 years beyond their diagnosis, and many live even longer than that. Even if the cancer has spread, new treatments and therapies can help improve survival rates and quality of life. Early detection is essential.
- 4. Myth:** Only older women get breast cancer.
Not true. The risk of getting breast cancer does rise with growing older, but young women (birth - 39 years old) can get breast cancer. Between the ages of 40 - 59 the risk increases to 4%, and between the ages of 60 - 79 the risk is 7%. If you live to be 90 years old, your overall lifetime risk is 14.3%. Develop a healthy lifestyle and reduce your risk. Your body is worth the extra work it takes to enjoy a healthy life.
- 5. Myth:** Birth control pills cause breast cancer.
Not true. In the past, birth control pills used a higher dose of hormones to reduce the possibility of conception, but the hormone dose created only a slightly higher risk. Today's birth control pills do contain the hormones estrogen and progesterone, but the doses are lower than the old pills. The lower doses of hormones are not linked to higher risks of breast cancer. Consult with your doctor or nurse practitioner for their professional opinion on your use of birth control pills.
- 6. Myth:** A high-fat diet causes breast cancer.
Not true. Despite several medical studies on this issue, it can not be proved that a diet that is high in fat will cause breast cancer. Excess body weight in the form of fat results in higher production of

estrogen, in addition to that which your ovaries already produce. That extra estrogen may fuel some types of breast tumors. A diet that is low in saturated fats is good for your heart health (lower cholesterol) as well as your breast health (normal estrogen levels.)

7. **Myth:** Breast cancer is in my family and I can't avoid getting it.
Not true. You are a unique person, and your body is made up of a combination of inherited qualities. Even if you are tested for breast cancer genes, you can still take control of several aspects of your overall health. A healthy diet, not smoking, very little alcohol, regular exercise, can all add up to a lower risk for you.
8. **Myth:** Having kids and breastfeeding is guaranteed protection.
Not true. While it is true that having at least 2 pregnancies before you're 30, and breastfeeding your babies can lower your risk of getting breast cancer, it is not a guarantee of protection. However, to further lower your risk, add regular exercise and a healthy diet, don't smoke and drink very little alcohol. Have regular screenings and annual checkups with your doctor, to make sure that you have a baseline on all your critical health tests. You and your children are worth the effort!

Domestic Violence in the Workplace

Homicide is by far the leading cause of death to women in the workplace.

- ❖ Partners and boyfriends commit 13,000 acts of violence against women in the workplace every year.
- ❖ Of Battered Workers:
 - 96% experience problems at work due to abuse.
 - 74% are harassed while at work by their abuser.
 - 56% are late to work.
 - 28% leave work early.
 - 54% miss entire days of work.
- ❖ More secretaries were slain on the job in 1993 than police officers and bartenders combined.

The Corporate Cost of Domestic Violence:

- ❖ Employers lose between \$3 and \$5 billion every year for increased medical costs associated with battered workers.
- ❖ Businesses lose an additional \$100 million in lost wages, sick leave and absenteeism.
- ❖ Over 1,750,000 workdays are lost each year due to domestic violence.
- ❖ Domestic violence in the United States costs an estimated \$67 billion annually.
- ❖ 66% of senior executives surveyed agreed that their company's financial performance would benefit from addressing the issue of domestic violence among its employees.
- ❖ 94% of corporate security directors rank domestic violence as a high security risk.
- ❖ 78% of Human Resource Directors identify domestic violence as a substantial employee problem.

Source: Oklahoma Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

Red Flags, Predictors and Things to Watch For

Red Flags for Abuse

Recommendations: There is insufficient evidence to recommend for or against the use of specific screening instruments to detect family violence, but anyone working with women or couples should be alert to various presentations of spouse, partner and child abuse.

Predictors of Domestic Violence

The following signs often occur before actual abuse and may serve as clues to potential abuse.

- ❖ Did your partner grow up in a violent family?
- ❖ Does your partner tend to use force or violence to "solve" their problems?
- ❖ Does your partner have strong traditional ideas about what a man should be and what a woman should be?
- ❖ Is your partner jealous of other relationships—with male and female friends and family?

Things to Watch For

Taken individually these indicators may mean nothing. But, the worker should be aware of repeated mentioning of any of these or combinations of indicators.

- ❖ Frequent or unexplained bruises or injuries or the explanations just don't add up.
- ❖ Becoming unusually quiet or withdrawn, especially when the partner is around.
- ❖ Frequently missed appointments or breaking appointments at the last minute with no explanation.
- ❖ Wearing concealing clothing, even in warm weather.
- ❖ Casually mentioning violent behavior or dismissing violent behavior as no big deal.
- ❖ An absence of support system: isolation.
- ❖ Evidence of broken furniture or damage to the home, such as holes in walls or broken doors.
- ❖ Seemingly little or no access to money, phones or transportation.
- ❖ Seems limited in freedom to come and go.

If you suspect one of your coworkers or friends are victims, discreetly offer your assistance to locate a women's counseling center in the local vicinity or you could anonymously insert a business card of a women's crisis center in an enclosed envelope and leave the envelope in their desk drawer.

Source: Oklahoma Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

*There can never be enough said of the virtues, the dangers, the power
of a shared laugh.*

Francoise Sagan

Powerful Communication for Women

Perhaps you're that rare woman who proved immune to the nature-nurture pressures to *Speak Like a Girl*. Chances are you succumbed and now are realizing how much you want to pull yourself up to the

I Know What I'm Talking About status. These pressures show up in a variety of communication differences between men and women. Deborah Tannen's '*You Don't Understand*' explains that men use "report talk" to give information that enhances their power while women tend to use "rapport talk" to give information that helps build relationships. Women usually come out ahead in relationship-building communication—and that's okay. What's not okay is how we lose out sounding like a leader or an expert. We're giving away our power in business.

We have a problem to solve: Women are losing out in business. Women are now half of our workforce—46.5% to be exact—and only 16% of upper management. And that's a huge discrepancy!

Tip: The next time you're in a meeting and the discussion starts coming around to an area of interest to you, speak up right away. Studies show men talk more—and longer—in meetings than women. That fact alone makes them look more like experts. Assume the floor and forbid yourself from uttering the phrase "I think." If you were going to say, "I think marketing needs to work more closely with advertising." change that to "Marketing needs to work more closely with advertising."

Expect a challenge to your assertiveness so have 2 or 3 facts ready to support what you said. Deliver them in bullet-points (for easy digestion), without any anger or defensiveness and in a manner that doesn't cause anyone to lose face in public.

Making a Difference

Find another woman to be your ***Expert Buddy***. Plan your comments and supporting facts the day before a meeting. Agree to help monitor the "I think" comments. When you become proficient, each of could take on a new buddy. Let's make the workplace better for everyone.

Source: *Women's Media*

Book, by Deborah Tannen, *Talking from 9 to 5 : Women and Men at Work*

Happy Birthday!!

Kim Hare – Oct 2nd

Mary Holzer – Oct 3rd

Teri Jones – Oct 18th

Martha Cutcher-Edison – Oct 20th

Greater OKC FEW Chapter #30

invites you to attend

Successful



Interviewing Techniques

*Presented by
Guest Speakers from various
Agencies*

When: October 30th, 2007

Where: VA Medical Center Learning Resource
Center (NE 13th & Kelley)

Time: 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

RSVP by Oct 26th: Call Jo Smith at 677-7249



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