



Overview

Women's Health Overview

Coping with Body Image Changes after Breast Cancer

"Body image is a subjective experience, because how we see ourselves may not match how others see us."

For many women, a breast cancer diagnosis can bring on a flood of emotions and worries, including a fear of dying, financial and work related stress, childcare, and problems communicating with loved ones, among others. At the time of diagnosis, women primarily focus on attending medical appointments, deciding on treatment options, and getting through treatment. Changes in body image may not immediately come to mind.

However, after active treatment ends, the bandages have come off and the dust starts to settle, some women are left with a body that does not quite look or feel like their own. Breast cancer treatment can result in significant physical changes, such as the loss of

part of, one whole, or both breasts, scarring, changes in skin or hair texture, lymphedema, hair loss and weight gain. For some women, these physical changes increase feelings of shame about their bodies, which in turn can lead to depression, disruptions in sexual functioning and intimate relationships, and feeling isolated from friends and family.

Why does body image play such a large role in the breast cancer experience? Body image is a subjective experience, because how we see ourselves may not match how others see us. It includes how we perceive, think, feel and act toward our body's appearance and how it functions, as well as how we see ourselves in relation to others. Most of us have grown up receiving messages from family members and peers, as well as being exposed to images in magazines, movies, and social media about what is thought to be an "ideal" appearance. When

see Body Image pg 4

How to Practice Self Acceptance

Learning to love yourself amid a sea of critical media messages and other societal pressures can be difficult. Starting the journey of self acceptance now will benefit you immediately and help brighten your future.

- Celebrate strengths instead of focusing on perceived flaws. Try to notice one personal strength every day
- Surround yourself with positive and supportive people. Set physical and mental boundaries to protect yourself from others' negativity
- Forgive yourself for past mistakes or bad behavior, and move on. Focus on the future
- Recognize your own humanity. You cannot be perfect all the time but you can try your best 100% of the time
- Be kind to yourself. Self care is not selfish

source: psychcentral.com



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newsletter is published quarterly for health care professionals and the general public with special interest in women's health issues by the Olson Center for Women's Health.

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An alternative electronic version of the newsletter is available. If you would like to receive this electronic version in addition to the print version, or instead of, please email your request to ljmolczy@unmc.edu.

From the chairman

Last week I had the opportunity to engage in a Culture Reshaping workshop sponsored by our clinical partner, Nebraska Medicine. After nearly three decades of working at UNMC, this is certainly not the first such course I've undertaken. I must admit I entered into it with a certain amount of skepticism. The goals of these activities are noble but often seem to fall short during the execution phase.

This time it felt a bit different. Our consultants worked to empower participants to manage implementation of the curriculum by themselves. The exercise provided an opportunity for a variety of our colleagues to work together, compared to the usual approach of each individual work unit or department training by itself. Most importantly, the approach is simple, logical and intuitive.

At the end of the session we were asked to create three or four "I will" statements as an indication of what we are willing to do to change our culture. Rather than bore you with my three, I want to share one I wish had written: "I will be more like Harry."

This might seem a bit odd, but let me explain. Harry Ward was the chancellor of the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences when I accepted a position there almost 20 years ago. Harry was a wonderful human being and a strong leader. I did not always agree with him but I always felt better having spent time with him. He had a unique ability to say, "No." He was so skilled that you frequently did not realize that the answer was no until you were back in your office. Strangely you were fine with the decision.

So my challenge to the reader and my colleagues is to be "more like Harry." Wouldn't our work and personal lives be so much richer if people felt better after having spent time with us? Think about it!

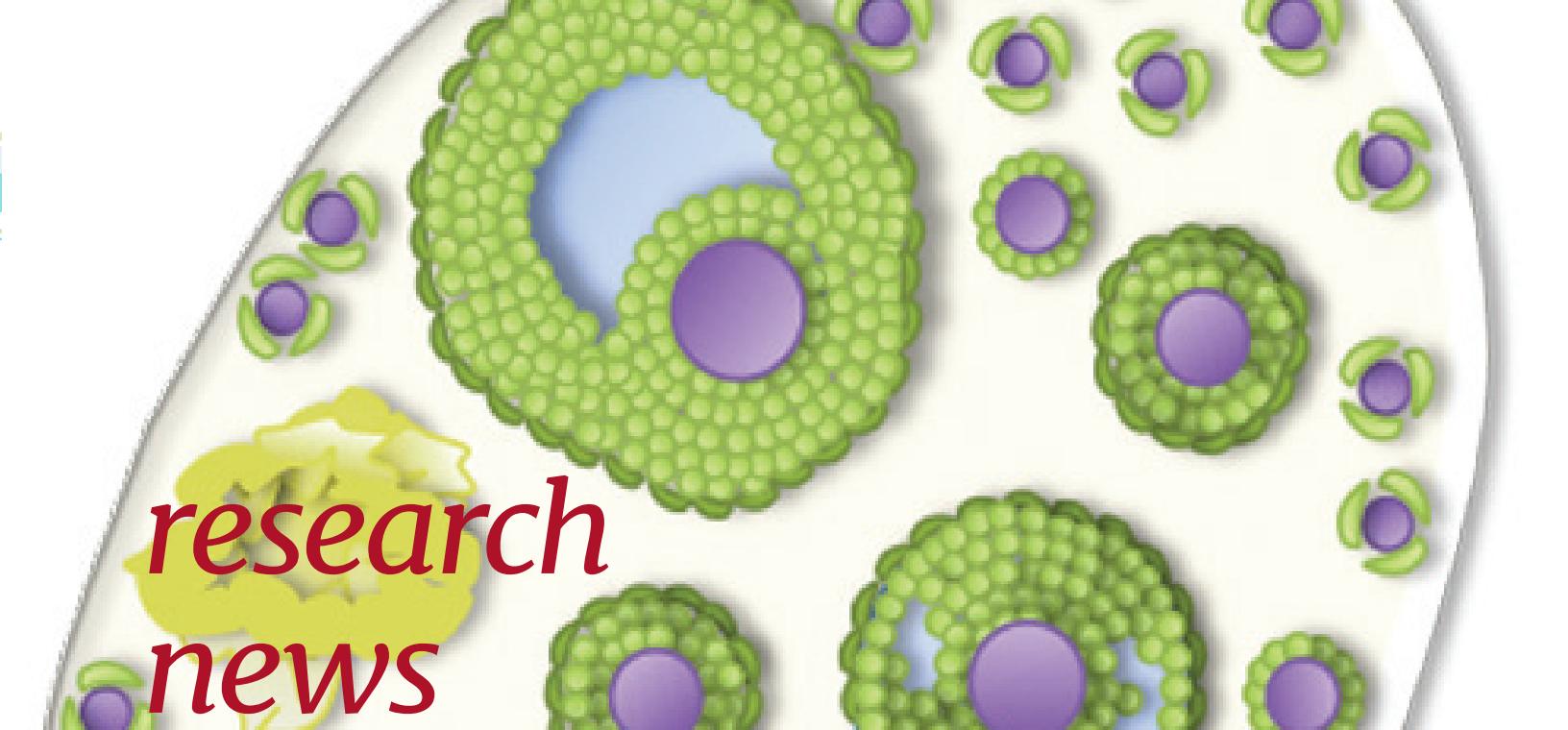
Carl V. Smith, MD, FRCOG

Chairman

Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology

College of Medicine

University of Nebraska Medical Center



research news

Grants Fund Research into Ovarian Development

Infertility is a major health problem affecting about 4 million women, or about 6 to 10% of women of reproductive age in the United States. Through two federal grants, the National Institutes of Health and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs are putting Olson Center for Women's Health investigators on the front lines of research in ovarian development.

The ovary is a fascinating organ that contributes the maturation of oocytes (eggs) and the production of sex hormones, which are important not only for successful reproduction but also for women's quality of life. The ovarian follicle is the essential functional unit of the ovary. Immature ovarian follicles form around the time of birth when cells in the ovary surround an egg. The early formation of follicles is a critical cellular transition process in ovarian development.

These early follicles are the single most important contributor to the pool of eggs available for women during their reproductive lifespan. Errors in this process result in the failure of follicle formation leading to improper ovarian development and premature ovarian failure.

Ultimately, this failure results in infertility and the early onset of postmenopausal health complications.

The Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) granted a 5 year \$1.6 million investigator initiated R01 award to Shyamal Roy, PhD, professor of obstetrics and gynecology, to initiate the project "Novel regulation of early follicle formation". The goal of this project is to understand the molecular basis of normal and defective follicle formation.

The VA Office of Research and Development granted a 4 year \$710,000 Merit Award to John S. Davis, PhD, professor of obstetrics and gynecology; director of research and development for the Olson Center for Women's Health and senior research career scientist for the VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care system (NWIHCS). The VA project, titled "Signals controlling tissues homeostasis in the ovary," will examine the role of a recently discovered molecular pathway that controls ovarian development and production of sex hormones.

These awards highlight the benefits and importance of collaborative research. Drs. Roy and Davis are coinvestigators on each other's projects. Other key personnel who play a role in these grants are Andrea Cupp, PhD, and Jennifer Wood, PhD, at UNL; Jixin Dong, PhD, at the Fred and Pamela Buffet Cancer Center; Babu Guda, PhD, director of the UNMC Bioinformatics and Systems Biology Core; and Lynette Smith, PhD, UNMC College of Public Health.

The research proposed in these awards will improve efforts to develop better treatment options for women with diminished ovarian reserve, polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS), and with conditions of chronic infertility. Potential benefits are improved quality-of-life with reduced costs and less time off due to reproductive issues/treatments.

Contributed by John S. Davis, PhD
UNMC Department of OB-GYN

we feel that we are falling short of these impossible standards, our inner critic can become louder and more negative, and we may start to feel self conscious, embarrassed, and ashamed of ourselves. Perhaps we spend considerable time concealing, thinking about, or checking perceived imperfections in the mirror. In some cases, we may even avoid socializing with friends or loved ones altogether.

Notably, the changes in body image that breast cancer survivors experience tend to be connected to the features that are emphasized in our culture and society as "feminine," such as full breasts, long hair, and a slim figure. Research has shown that body image concerns are actually quite common among breast cancer survivors of all ages and backgrounds. Sadly, few survivors share their concerns with others for fear of being judged as "vain." However, it is normal to have body image concerns and survivors should not be afraid to talk about them.

Every breast cancer survivor is unique, and the amount of body image distress each woman feels can range from mild to severe. In my clinical practice and research, I have found that for some women, adjusting to changes in body image after breast cancer treatment can be a challenging, ongoing process. Some helpful coping strategies I teach others to use include the following:

- Share your concerns and needs with spouses, family members, friends, other breast cancer survivors, and medical providers
- Recognize the pressures from external sources that could be affecting how you see yourself
- Be mindful of your negative and critical thoughts about your body image
- Try being kinder and more compassionate to yourself by, for example, thinking about what would you say to a friend who was going through a similar situation
- Practice body image acceptance. This does *not* mean you have to be completely satisfied with and happy about every aspect of your body. Acceptance means appreciating your body as it is, at this moment, and caring for your body's needs through healthy behaviors like proper diet and exercise

Additional resources also include Look Good Feel Better (lookgoodfeelbetter.org), which is a free program that aims to help people with cancer manage appearance related side effects of cancer treatment. The program includes tips on clothing, skin care, and options for hair loss. It can also be helpful to find and join a local breast cancer support group, where you can voice your concerns and receive support and feedback from other members. If you believe you need additional, individualized psychological support, locate a mental health care provider in your community who specializes in working with people who are living with a chronic illness.

If you would like to learn more about body image in general, I will be providing a breakout session at the upcoming Omaha Women's Health & Wellness Conference on Friday Oct. 25. My presentation will include information about the different components of body image and the way it changes throughout the life span. I will discuss the negative consequences of an unhealthy body image, including an increased risk for eating disorders, depression and sexual dysfunction. Last, I will identify adaptive, healthy coping strategies and demonstrate a short exercise on self compassion and body image acceptance.

Mission Statement

The Mission of the Olson Center for Women's Health is to provide a national comprehensive health science center at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. Based in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, the center enables UNMC to make distinctive strides in education, research, and service through innovative approaches to women's health issues.

Want More Information?

Visit our website: OlsonCenter.com

Learn more about our healthcare providers, services, and programs available at the Olson Center for Women's Health. Our website also offers women's health information.

Here are a few topics:

- Breastfeeding
- Breast Health and Disease
- Cardiovascular Health
- Gastrointestinal Health
- Gynecologic Health
- Reproductive Endocrinology/Infertility
- Pregnancy
- Wellness
- Incontinence

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Contributed by Emaan Lehardy, PhD
Nebraska Medicine Clinical Psychology

Omaha Women's Health & Wellness Conference

Friday, Oct. 25, 2019
La Vista Conference Center

**2019 Conference Agenda**

8 AM	Registration, Health Fair and Screenings
8:50 AM	Welcome and Opening Session
9 AM	Breakfast Keynote: Athena Ramos, PhD, MBA, MS, CPM "Changing the Game on the Social Determinants of Health: A Road Map to Well-being"
10:15 AM	Refreshment Break, Health Fair, Sponsor Exhibits and Screenings
10:45 PM	General Session: Michael Summers, MD "Women and Sleep Disorders"
12 PM	Lunch
1 PM	Breakout Session (choose 1, 2, or 3) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "Vaccine Recommendations for Nebraskans" - Ally Dering-Anderson, PharmD 2. "Skin Changes During Each Decade of a Woman's Life" - Jennifer Abrahams, MD 3. "Hoarding: The Difference Between Messy and Mental Disorder" - Lauren Edwards, MD
2:15 PM	Refreshment Break and Sponsor Exhibits
2:45 PM	Breakout Session (choose 4, 5, or 6) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. "Work/Life Balance: Staying in Rhythm at Work and Home" - Theresa Nelson, MA 5. "Women's Body Image Across the Lifespan" - Emaan Lehardy, PhD 6. "Safety in Numbers: Four Lessons in Cybersecurity" - Ryan Sothan, BSBA
4:10 PM	Closing Session: Nick Howe - "Into the Future" Evaluations and Door Prizes
4:30 PM	Adjourn

Registration Deadline: Friday, Oct. 18

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Daytime Phone: _____ Evening Phone: _____ RN/LPN License Number: _____

Email: _____

I require a medically necessary diet (please explain, ex: diabetic): _____

First Breakout Session (choose one) 1 2 3 **Second Breakout Session (choose one)** 4 5 6

Registration is \$59. Olson Wellness Exchange (OWE) members may receive a \$5 discount off the general registration fee. Registration includes breakfast, lunch, lectures and exhibits. **No refunds after Friday, Oct. 18.** For more information about the conference or to become an OWE member, please contact the Olson Center for Women's Health at 402.559.6345. Nursing credit is an additional \$30.

The University of Nebraska Medical Center College of Nursing Continuing Nursing Education is accredited with distinction as a provider of continuing nursing education by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation. This activity is provided for 5.0 contact hours under ANCC criteria.

Make check or money order to: **University of Nebraska Medical Center**

Mail check or money order to:

Omaha Women's Health & Wellness Conference
Olson Center for Women's Health
989450 Nebraska Medical Center
Omaha, NE 68198-9450

Registration Fee	\$59
OWE Member	- \$5
Nursing Credit	+ \$30
TSH	+ \$7
Lipid,Glucose	_____
CBC	+ \$17
Flu Vaccine	+ \$20
Total =	_____

You may register online with a credit card. Go to OmahaWomensHealthandWellness.com
Please note, there is a 2.75% service fee if you pay with a credit card.

Note: The health screenings listed below require preregistration. Place an "X" by the health screenings you would like completed. You will receive a letter in the mail confirming your registration and including your appointment time for these screenings.

Lipid, Glucose, CBC \$17 (includes lipid panel, glucose, complete blood count) TSH for thyroid \$7

Quadrivalent Fluarix Flu Vaccine \$20
(The quadrivalent flu vaccine is designed to project against four different flu viruses: two influenza A viruses and two influenza B viruses.)

Date of Birth (please provide if having blood work performed) _____

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welcoming new providers



Jayne Clara, APRN-NP attended the University of Memphis, in Memphis, Tennessee, where she received her master's degree in nursing. She takes a thorough and precise approach to her consultations to ensure she is consistently giving accurate diagnoses.

Tricia Fredericks, MD attended Creighton University Medical School in Omaha, Nebraska. She is interested in the intersections of public health and gynecologic oncology and understanding how to prevent or detect disease earlier and improve patient outcomes.



Karyta Gadjoro, APRN-NP attended the University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha, Nebraska. She worked in private practice for five years before joining the Olson Center for Women's Health. Her professional passion is empowering women to play an active role in their health.

Danielle Hicks, APRN-NP attended the University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha, Nebraska. During her Doctor of Nursing Practice program, she assisted with development and implementation of a process to quantify blood loss in postpartum patients.



in this issue

page 1 Coping with Body Image Changes after Breast Cancer explains how breast cancer can change a woman's body image, as well as tips on coping with these changes.

page 3 Research News New grants advance ovarian follicle research, which may benefit patients struggling with infertility.

page 5 Omaha Women's Health & Wellness Conference Register now!

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