



RESEARCH



Cervical Cells May Hold Key to Predicting OC Risk

Cervical cell samples that are routinely collected as part of Pap smears may hold promise for predicting the risk of ovarian and other cancers, according to recent findings published as two separate papers in *Nature* — one focused on ovarian cancer and the other on breast cancer.

The researchers studied cervical samples collected at 15 different health centers in Europe from approximately 3,000 women — some with ovarian cancer, some with breast cancer, and some without either disease. The cervical cells were analyzed for specific “epigenetic footprints” that are associated with higher risk of ovarian or breast cancer, according to the scientists.

“Our studies have taken a completely novel approach and evaluate an individual’s risk for more than one cancer by assessing several different epigenetic footprints in a single cervical screening sample,” said lead researcher Dr. Martin Widschwendter of University College London, University of Innsbruck, and the European Translational Oncology Prevention and Screening Institute.

These “epigenetic footprints” are identified by looking at chemical modifications or marks to the cell’s DNA that occur via a process known as DNA methylation. These marks tell the cell how to read the DNA and act on it. But both environmental factors and lifestyle habits can alter these marks in a way that is damaging to how the cell behaves, which the researchers believe may lead to increased cancer risk in some cases. The tests that they have developed, which are named WID for Women’s risk IDentification, involve the use of an algorithm that has been trained to spot specific patterns in DNA methylation marks that correlate to an increased risk of ovarian or breast cancer.

“Importantly, the tests do not detect actual cancer but rather indicate genetic, lifestyle and environment risk factors associated with them and may be able to predict future risk,” according to a statement from The Eve Appeal, which co-funded the study.

The findings may pave the way for future screening tools, but more research is needed. The scientists plan to use large population trials to see whether the newly developed tests accurately predict cancer before it occurs.

“As with any new test, they will need trialing on a large number of the population over the next years before being available widely,” said Dr. Chiara Herzog of University of Innsbruck and the European Translational Oncology Prevention and Screening Institute, who is a part of the research team. “Our next research will also discover whether the tests are best suited for screening all women and people with a cervix, or only in those with a known increased risk of these cancers (e.g., people with a BRCA alteration or family history).”



One to One is devoted to the on-going support of those newly diagnosed, those in remission and those in recurrence.

100% of contributions directly benefit our group by providing activities and paying for expenses.

Donations are gratefully accepted and can be made by check payable to **One to One Ovarian Cancer Support Group** c/o Marilyn Brozovic 4793 Alton Dr. Troy, MI 48085

A receipt will be provided for tax purposes.

(Posted on 02/09/22 in *Research*, and reprinted with permission from the Ovarian Cancer Research Alliance website: ocrahope.org)



PROFILE IN

Courage



By Marcia Gurche

Whew! After speaking with **Diane Callaghan**, I quickly realized why she suggested that I interview her during the time she was in the infusion chair while she was receiving her chemotherapy. It appears that her treatment time just might be the only downtime in her very busy weekly schedule. Fortunately, this current regimen of Doxil does not cause her to experience a lot of side effects, which is a good thing since Diane and her husband, **Bill**, don't really have time in their schedules to allow for recuperation. While they are both retired, they are active volunteers for their church, taking communion to the homebound, acting as ushers and working at the homeless mission. Diane serves lunches at the Good Samaritan Homeless Shelter each week and volunteers at the free health care clinic. She and Bill babysit two days a week for their two youngest grandchildren, set aside some quality time to visit with Bill's 95-year-old mother, and she still finds time to play pickleball at the YMCA. Reading is also a big part of Diane's life, and she is a member of a book club which meets regularly to read and discuss books. These activities are just the regularly scheduled ones — stay tuned for the other activities that Diane and Bill enjoy!



Bill and Diane met on a blind date and have been married for 43 years. Diane worked as a nurse for 23 years at McLaren Hospital in several departments, including surgical services and as the coordinator of the pain clinic. She retired in 2017 from a regular nursing practice. Bill spent his working career as a carpenter and thirty years ago, he built their home in Bay City where they raised their family. They have two daughters and one son, **Kristen, Shannon, and Greg**. Kristen, a physical therapist, lives in Bay City with her husband, **Kevin**, and their two daughters, **Harper** (9 years) and **Teghan** (1 ½ years.) Their daughter, Shannon, an administrator for Paragon 28, a foot and ankle prosthesis company, and her husband, **Russ**, live in Portage with their sons, **Cameron** (8 years) and **Mason** (6 years). Son, Greg, works in IT at McLaren and lives in Bay City with his wife, **Courtney** and daughter, **Quinn** (1 ½ years). The Callaghan family is eagerly awaiting the birth of Greg and Courtney's next baby in April.

As a young family the Callaghans enjoyed tent camping and took many fun and memorable family vacations. Bill and Diane still enjoy camping and now have a small camper which they travel with to visit the state parks throughout Michigan and around the country. They are anticipating taking a trip out east soon. Diane has a brother, **Gary** who lives in Sarasota, Florida and they hope to work in a trip to see him this winter. They have become very seasoned international travelers since retirement and have visited Italy, Ireland, New Zealand, Australia, Alaska, Costa Rica, England, and Scotland. Depending on the opportunity, they occasionally travel with family or friends, but often they travel alone.



Diane was born in Detroit to her parents, **Alma** and **Erwin**. However, while still young she and her brother moved with their parents to Bay City when her father, a Greyhound bus driver, was transferred there. She attended All Saints High School and got her LPN at a practical nursing school. After working for five years, she returned to school and



earned her bachelor's degree in nursing at Ferris State University. Diane has maintained friendships with some of the classmates from her high school. One of them, **Barb**, was able to attend our *One to One Girls' Get-Away Weekend* with her this past October.

Diane has immersed herself in a myriad of activities to help raise awareness of ovarian cancer, and her family and friends have joined her in her journey. She ran in the Mother's Day race in Ann Arbor, which is sponsored by MIOCA. She also spearheaded the September Bay City campaign to Tie Michigan Teal by tying teal ribbons around town to raise awareness of ovarian cancer.

Since her ovarian cancer diagnosis in 2018, Diane has been on two different regimens of Carboplatin and Taxotere — first time at her original diagnosis and again when she recurred in 2022; she took Zejula for around 8 months; received five treatments of radiation; and is now on Doxil. Diane would be the first to say that it has been traumatic dealing with ovarian cancer for the last six years. However,

she also says that she has learned to appreciate the day-to-day things more and she tries not to feel sorry for herself for too long at a time. She knows that bad things can happen to anyone at any time and that if you are having a bad day things always look better the next day.

Diane says that her strong faith is extremely important in helping her stay positive, as well as unending family and friend support. Caring for her grandchildren gives her so much joy and the strength to get through the uncertainty of what tomorrow will bring. Keeping active and maintaining her energy through exercise and good nutrition is also a high priority in her life. By volunteering and giving to others she feels a sense of purpose, and the rewards she receives in return are immeasurable. Diane takes pride in making the most of each day, living life to the fullest, while still taking time to savor each moment. Diane says that she has learned not to take anything for granted; accepting that God is the one in control.

She has learned that ovarian cancer is a chronic disease, and she is enjoying making a new life and learning how to live with it. One of Diane's friends told her that she is "Living healthy with cancer." What a smart observation.



The Power of the Spirit Written by Rik Cryderman, Chaplain, Beaumont, Troy (April 2004)

"Are you scared, mom?" I asked my mother, in the midst of her treatment for ovarian cancer.

I had asked the question because I was frightened for her. "I was..." she shared, "...until I remembered that I am just a renter. This is the body God loaned me to live in during my earthly journey. When you rent and the roof leaks, you turn it over to the landlord—it is his worry. I am doing the same. He has always taken good care of me." Her faith and spiritual view of this crisis was contagious and I found comfort in her calm reply. Her self-managed spiritual therapy was evidenced again when I asked her, "How long do your radiation treatments take?" She answered, "I'm not sure in minutes, but it takes long enough for me to recite the 23rd Psalm and say The Lord's Prayer." Measuring moments with meditation in the midst of crisis is truly living spiritually.

The medical world now recognizes the importance of the spirit in health. Ancient literature always reminded us, "A cheerful heart is good medicine." Studies and research in recent years confirm the benefits of meditation, prayer, recitation, scripture reading, laughter, music and other spiritual expression. Such activities lift us above our struggles and rejuvenate us through the rigors of treatment, provide relief from pain or the anxiety that often accompanies the experience—and yes, in some cases provides courage and contentment at life's end.

As a chaplain, I am convinced in the healing, helping power as we tap our spiritual energy. A small verse in the New Testament says it better: "...though outwardly we are wasting away, inwardly we are renewed day by day." I have seen spiritual powerhouses in weak bodies and they have endured as champions...to recovery or to resurrection. And to the spiritual, either is victory.

Tapping the power of the spirit brings strength to the cancer patient as it reminds us this disease cannot threaten the spirit—only the body. It tells us we are not alone, we have a Companion who provides strength and healing—an Advocate who knows, cares and walks the journey with us. Finally, looking through spiritual eyes, our greatest fear fades with the persuasion death is but a doorway to a brighter day.





REELING AND HEALING FLY-FISHING RETREATS

In the fishing world, you often hear "Fish On!" when a fish is hooked. It marks the beginning of a battle with something wild and unknown. To women battling, surviving, or living with cancer, who have participated in our fly-fishing wellness retreats, it means much more. To them, "Fish On!" is a statement of action. "Fish On!" means I will embrace life and thrive in my survivorship. It means I will continue fighting. Continue healing. Continue living.

Reeling & Healing Midwest and their unique fly-fishing wellness retreats bestow the "Fish On!" spirit to women battling and surviving cancer. They focus on creating ways to apply the amazing art of fly-fishing to encourage cancer survivors on their journey toward physical, emotional and spiritual healing.

Reeling & Healing Midwest is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization championing fly-fishing wellness retreats for women battling or recovering from cancer. Their mission is to introduce these women to the healing powers of fly-fishing by providing a one-of-a-kind experience, on and off the river, which renews their spirit and hope through the combined elements of fly-fishing, nature, peer coaching, positive camaraderie and support.

Retreats are led by professional facilitators and certified fly-fishing instructors. The cost for a new participant to attend a retreat starts at \$40. All equipment, lodging and meals are provided. Scholarships are available. No prior fishing experience is required.

The dates for this year's retreats are: **August 4-August 6;**
August 11-August 13; August 18-August 20 and August 25-August 27.

For more information about this amazing opportunity which takes place at Gates Lodge on the AuSable River in Grayling, Michigan, please call 616-855-4017 or email info@ReelingandHealing.org or visit FishOn.org.



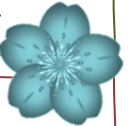
Renew Spirit. Renew Hope. FISH ON with Us!



HAPPY SURVIVORSary

March

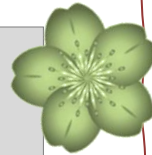
Cheryl Meehan	26 yrs!
Lori Coluzzi	14
Lynne Karty	8
Christine Babish	7
Jill Covert	4



HAPPY SURVIVORSary

April

Suzanne Kauffman	26 yrs!
Candy Brandon-Watters	21
Michelle Shepherd	20
Barb Livingston	19
Arlene Beyma	8
Kathy Dominczak	8
Pam Peplinski	4



meeting

Group meetings are held on the **2nd Thursday** of the month at **4 pm**.

Meetings are in-person at the **Berkley Public Library** and are also held via Zoom.

You are welcome to join us for dinner following the meeting at *The Avenue Restaurant*, located on Woodward just north of 13 Mile.

March 14
April 11
May 9

Newsletter information is presented in summary form, is general in nature and provided for informational purposes only. It is not intended in any way to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment.

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Objectives of support group:

- ✦ *Provide a forum for ovarian cancer patients to address concerns;*
- ✦ *Support each other through initial treatment phase, during potential recurrence, and with issues related to long term survival;*
- ✦ *Establish core group of survivors willing to visit newly diagnosed patients;*
- ✦ *Increase awareness of ovarian cancer, including its symptoms and risk factors, in the hope of achieving earlier detection and treatment.*