

## **Black Cohosh in Tamoxifen-Treated Breast Cancer Patients.**

*Source: Gynecological Endocrinology, nbiondemand.com*

Breast cancer is a cancer that forms in tissues of the breast, usually the ducts (tubes that carry milk to the nipple) and lobules (glands that make milk). It occurs in both men and women, although male breast cancer is rare. Risk factors for breast cancer include gender, age, family history, defective genes, early onset of menstruation, late menopause and late childbearing. Breast cancer is about ninety percent due to genetic abnormalities that happen as a result of the aging process and the "wear and tear" of life in general.

Black cohosh (*Cimicifuga racemosa*) has made a name for itself in many parts of the world. The hairy roots of this plant have been used in Chinese medicine for centuries as a remedy for conditions such as headache, non-eruptive measles, gingivitis, and other disorders. Native Americans used it as a remedy for painful menses, problematic childbirth, arthritic problems, and as an antidote for snakebite. Some physicians in America at the turn of the century relied on preparations of black cohosh for many problems, including rheumatism and female complaints.

Scientists at the Institute of Complementary Medicine, University Hospital, Zurich, Switzerland conducted a prospective observational study involving the use of black cohosh in breast cancer patients with tamoxifen treatment having menopausal complaints. All 50 patients included in the study had surgery, most of them had undergone radiation therapy (87%) and approximately 50% had received chemotherapy. The patients were treated with 1-4 tablets, 2.5 mg of black cohosh extract for six months and recorded their complaints using the menopause rating scale (MRS II).

The reduction in the MRS II score with black cohosh treatment was statistically significant going from 17.6 to 13.6 experiencing improvement in hot flashes, sweating, sleep problems and anxiety. Tolerability of black cohosh extract was rated as very good or good in 90 percent of the patients. These findings suggest black cohosh extract as a reasonable treatment approach in tamoxifen treated breast cancer patients with climacteric complaints.<sup>1</sup>

1 Rostock M, Fischer J, Mumm A, et al. Black cohosh (*Cimicifuga racemosa*) in tamoxifen-treated breast cancer patients with climacteric complaints - a prospective observational study. *Gynecol Endocrinol*. Jan2011.