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Percutaneous Progesterone Use and Risk of Breast Cancer: Results from a French Cohort Study of Premenopausal Women with Benign Breast Disease

Plu-Bureau M.D., Ph.D., Lê M.D., Thalabard M.D., Ph.D., Sitruk-Ware M.D. & Mauvais-Jarvis M.D.

Percutaneous progesterone topically applied on the breast has been proposed and widely used in the relief of mastalgia and benign breast disease by numerous gynecologists and general practitioners. However, its chronic use has never been evaluated in relation to breast cancer risk. The association between percutaneous progesterone use and the risk of breast cancer was evaluated in a cohort study of 1150 premenopausal French women with benign breast disease diagnosed in two breast clinics between 1976 and 1979. The follow-up accumulated 12,462 person-years.

Percutaneous progesterone had been prescribed to 58% of the women. There was no association between breast cancer risk and the use of percutaneous progesterone (RR = 0.8; 95% confidence interval 0.4–1.6). Although the combined treatment of oral progestogens with percutaneous progesterone significantly decreased the risk of breast cancer (RR = 0.5; 95% confidence interval 0.2–0.9) as compared with nonusers, there was no significant difference in the risk of breast cancer in percutaneous progesterone users versus nonusers among oral progestogen users. Taken together, these results suggest at least an absence of deleterious effects caused by percutaneous progesterone use in

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women with benign breast disease.

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Affiliations

¹INSERM, Gustave-Roussy Institute, Villejuif, France, ²Department of Reproductive Endocrinology, Necker Hospital, Paris, France

Correspondence

Correspondence to: Plu-Bureau M.D. Medecine de la Reproduction, Hopital Necker, 149, Rue de Sèvres, 75015 Paris, France.

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