

17 March 2008

By: Stefan Anitei, Science Editor



Aspirin Saves the Boobs

It has effects upon breast cancer

Aspirin goes further than treating your headache and fever. Recently, it has been found to decrease the risk of colorectal cancer. But a new meta-analysis published in the International Journal of Clinical Practice could trigger more interest in this pill from women: aspirin and other anti-inflammatory drugs like aspirin could decrease breast cancer by up to 20%. "Our review of research published over the last 27 years suggests that, in addition to possible prevention, there may also be a role for NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) in the treatment of women with established breast cancer. NSAID use could be combined with hormone therapy or used to relieve symptoms in the commonest cause of cancer-related deaths in women," said co-author Professor Ian Fentiman from the Hedley Atkins Breast Unit at the hospital, part of Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust. The team analyzed the results of 21 researches made on over 37,000 women published between 1980 and 2007. 11 researches were made on women with breast cancer and 10 compared healthy and diseased subjects. "Having weighed up the findings from over 20 studies, we have concluded that NSAIDs may well offer significant protection against developing breast cancer in the first place and may provide a useful addition to the treatment currently available to women who already have the disease. Recent studies of NSAIDs use have shown about a 20% risk reduction in the incidence of breast cancer, but this benefit may be confined to aspirin use alone and not other NSAIDs," added Fentiman. NSAIDs like aspirin and ibuprofen have been used as main non-prescription analgesics, and their effect against coronary heart disease and other diseases has been known for long. Still, further studies are needed for a precise assessment of NSAIDs effects on impeding and treating breast cancer. "Our review did not look at the potential side effects of using NSAIDs on a regular basis. These can include gastrointestinal bleeding and perforation which can carry a significant risk of ill health and death. More research is clearly needed and we are not advocating that women take these non prescription drugs routinely until the benefits and risks are clearer," warned Fentiman.