

Breast cancer patients can reduce their risk of recurrence

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A few blogs ago I told you about my discussion with Otis Brawley, MD, the chief medical officer of ACS and his message that we have to use what we know to prevent cancer and be well, and it comes down to applying what we know about healthy living , meaning diet, nutrition, stress management, exercise, and the kind of psychological support we get from loving and supportive relationships.

I just heard the same message from Dean Ornish, MD, who has been promoting healthy lifestyle as a way to cure heart disease for more than two decades. Ornish was speaking at the annual meeting of the [Society for Integrative Oncology](#) in New York City. This meeting brought researchers from 19 countries with 25 different degrees to New York City to discuss the power of complementary healing modalities for cancer. Ornish's research is just as compelling now and he has offered a number of studies about the power of lifestyle change and its impact on cancer. Repeatedly, the researchers here have offered studies, well designed scientific research, on the power of the patient in being a part of his or her own cure.

This is a hard thing to write about without it sounding like there is some kind of blame being placed for getting cancer or for not being able to impact your own ability to impact cure, but in no way should you read it that way. Instead look at the research the same way you would if you were considering a drug to help you get better.

For example, I was excited to hear David Servan-Schreiber, MD, PhD, talk about the research of Barbara Anderson, PhD, at the University of Ohio, which you will read in the cover story of the Winter Issue of *CURE*. Anderson has followed a large contingent of breast cancer patients for more than six years. Half of them were followed with no intervention and the other half were enrolled in stress reduction program that had a number of components to it, such as relaxation, meditation, problem solving, finding community support, and exercise.

What she found was a 68 percent reduction in recurrence in the group doing the stress reduction. Servan-Schreiber, the survivor of a recurrent brain tumor and author of *Anticancer*, brought up Anderson's research, saying that if there was a drug that offered this kind of response and it was not given to patients, the doctor would be sued. I agree. So why are women not being told about these findings much less being offered the same support. I asked Barbara Anderson this question while talking to her about the research. She said she didn't have any idea.

So spread the word, ask your oncologist about Anderson's research. It was reported in 2008 in the journal *Cancer*. Get the article; send it to every one you know.

