

Breast cancer also a male illness

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Researchers in Edmonton, Canada, say men are usually shocked to learn they have breast cancer -- a disease they didn't know was possible for them to get.

Edie Pituskin, a University of Alberta Faculty of Nursing graduate student, said she is conducting what is believed to be the first North American study looking at what men experience after a breast cancer diagnosis.

The study is important, she said, considering the different ways men and women cope.

Pituskin, a clinical research nurse at Canada's Cross Cancer Institute, found a wide range of reactions to the diagnosis: from those who felt they could tell nobody what they were facing, to those who became vocal advocates.

One man lifted his shirt at work, warning other males it could happen to them. Yet other men said they would not go swimming or without a shirt because of the attention it might bring.

Pituskin hopes to raise awareness and not only encourage men to visit their doctors more often, but to highlight the disease to the physicians who may recognize the illness too late

She presents her preliminary findings during the Oct. 6-8 National Conference for Men's Health in Atlanta.

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