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Section

New drug better to fight breast cancer

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Women now have another drug they can take to prevent breast cancer from returning after surgery to remove the tumor.

The federal Food and Drug Administration on Wednesday approved a new use for Femara, a medication already licensed for treating advanced breast cancer. It now can be given as initial therapy to women past menopause who have early breast cancer, the agency said.

In Thursday's New England Journal of Medicine, a study reports that Femara was more effective at preventing recurrences than the current gold standard, tamoxifen.

Femara and Arimidex, a similar drug already licensed for early breast cancer, are aromatase inhibitors, which block production of estrogen, a hormone that fuels the growth of most tumors that develop after menopause. Tamoxifen works differently, by blunting the ability of estrogen to enter cells.

The published study, reported earlier this year in Europe, estimated that 84 percent of women given Femara versus 81 percent of those on tamoxifen would be alive without any signs of cancer five years after starting treatment.

The estimates were based on roughly two years of information on relapses among the 8,000 women in the study, done by researchers in the United States, Europe and Australia.

It was financed by Femara's maker, Novartis AG. Many of the researchers own stock in or are consultants for Novartis or companies with rival drugs.

Several other studies have shown Femara or Arimidex to be better either as initial treatment or after a couple years of tamoxifen.

"These trials, with close to 30,000 participants, consistently demonstrate that treatment with an aromatase inhibitor alone or after tamoxifen treatment is beneficial," Dr. Sandra Swain of the National Cancer Institute wrote in an editorial in the journal.

The challenge now is figuring out how long women should take these drugs, which drug is best, and whether switching drugs at some point is helpful, she wrote.

Tamoxifen remains the top choice for women who get breast cancer before menopause because aromatase inhibitors aren't thought to be effective then.

Aromatase inhibitors do not raise the risk of blood clots or endometrial cancer as tamoxifen does, but they do increase the chances of bone problems such as osteoporosis. Women are often advised to take supplements or other medications to maintain bone density.

A third aromatase inhibitor, Pfizer Inc.'s Aromasin, also has shown promise for preventing recurrence when given after several years of tamoxifen. But it has not yet been tested against tamoxifen as initial therapy the way Femara and AstraZeneca PLC's Arimidex have been.

Each year, about 800,000 women around the world are diagnosed with early breast cancer and about three-fourths are of the type that might benefit from these drugs.

Novartis shares gained 32 cents to close at \$52.12 Wednesday on the New York Stock Exchange.



THE STOCK MARKET

Role reversals

Older women are now more open to seeking younger men



PHOTO/STOCKMARKET

New research shows that women are no more monogamous than men, especially as they age.

By Cheri F. Hodges
cheri.hodges@thecharlottepost.com

For years, men have been painted as the most unfaithful gender.

But a recent book blows the lid off a secret that many women don't talk about—their own infidelity.

In the book "Women's Infidelity—Living in Limbo: What Women Really Mean When They Say 'I'm Not Happy,'" author Michelle Langley explores the hidden sexual nature of women.

"Most of the prevailing beliefs we hold about women were created in order to control the sexual behavior of women," she said. "Over time the sexual double standard gave way to a false belief that females were naturally monogamous."

In the 10 years that it took Langley to put her research together, she found that women cheat as much as men.

"Women are too easy to blame infidelity on men

and consider themselves victims," she said.

But when women reach a certain age, they enter their sexual prime, Langley said. When women are in their mid- to late 20s, they are just moving into their sexual prime, which is why many are dating and sleeping with younger men.

"When I started interviewing men I was amazed at how many men were seduced by an older woman," she said, recall-

ing one man's admission that he was 13 years old when he had sex with his mother's best friend.

The changes in women's hormonal balance as they age—specifically the unmasking of their testosterone—have been drastically minimized. Langley said most of the women she studied were not prepared for the dramatic increase in their desire for men outside of their primary relationships.

Please see **WOMEN/2B**

Miss. town plans Till memorial

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

GREENWOOD, Miss.—County officials have agreed to place a historical memorial to Emmett Till on a courthouse lawn in this northern Mississippi town.

Till, a 14-year-old black boy from Chicago, was visiting relatives in Mississippi when he was tortured and killed for allegedly whistling at a white woman in 1955. An all-white jury acquitted Roy Bryant and his half brother J.W. Milam in the killing. They later admitted in a magazine story they kidnapped and lynched Till, allegedly for whistling at Bryant's wife. Bryant and Milam have since died.

The U.S. Justice Department reopened the case last year, prompt-

ed in part by a documentary that found errors in the original investigation and concluded that several people, some still living, were involved in Till's abduction and killing.

The FBI says it has completed its investigation and its files were to be delivered to District Attorney Joyce Chiles of Greenville, who has said when she receives it she will decide whether to have a grand jury consider indictments.

Leflore County Chancery Clerk Sam Abraham said supervisors approved the marker but have not decided where the

marker or monument will be located on the courthouse grounds. Funding of the memorial wasn't discussed, he said. The construction of a memorial is subject to state and federal guidelines because the courthouse is on the National Register of Historic Places, Abraham said.

The Rev. Calvin Collins of New Zion Missionary Baptist Church said local residents had asked supervisors for the memorial.

"(Till) was a spark for the civil rights movement, one of the sparks, in this country," Collins said.

Collins said people from across the country are retracing the civil rights struggles of the 1950s and 1960s and that Greenwood and Leflore County are prominent players in that story.



Till

Have you been tested for glaucoma lately?

By Cheri F. Hodges
cheri.hodges@thecharlottepost.com

January is Glaucoma Awareness Month. And for African Americans, the disease is damning.

The most common form of glaucoma, called open angle glaucoma, accounts for 19 percent of all blindness in blacks, compared to 6 percent in whites.

African Americans between the ages of 45 to 65 are 14 times more likely to lose their eyesight to glaucoma.

What is glaucoma? It's poor drainage of the eye. The disorder doesn't have any warning symptoms.

"In a healthy eye, fluid is constantly being made and drained through a microscopic, drainage canal. When something blocks or prevents this natural drainage, the pressure inside the eye goes up. Glaucoma is often caused by increased pressure that can develop when the fluids in the eye are not draining properly,"

according to the American Academy of Ophthalmology.

As the disease progresses, a person with glaucoma may notice his or her side vision gradually failing. That is, objects in front may still be seen clearly, but objects to the side may be missed. As the disease worsens, the field of vision narrows and

blindness results.

In a study conducted by the American Academy of Ophthalmology, when blacks used eye drops it reduced the development of primary open-angle glaucoma by almost 50 percent. Just 8.4 percent of African-Americans who used the eye drops developed glaucoma, compared with 16.1 percent of those

who did not receive the eye drops, researchers report.

The findings indicate the urgency of identifying black Americans at higher risk for developing glaucoma so they can receive evaluation for possible treatment, the researchers said.

In honor of Glaucoma

See **GLAUCOMA/3B**



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION/WADE NASH

African Americans are more likely to lose their eyesight to glaucoma than whites.



Obesity surgery is soaring

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MILWAUKEE—As more people abandon New Year's resolutions to lose weight and turn to obesity surgery, doctors are debating which type is safest and best.

And researchers are uncovering some surprising trends.

The most common method in the United States—gastric bypass, or stomach-stapling surgery—may be riskier than once thought. Yet surgeons still favor it for people who need to lose weight fast because of heart damage or other serious problems.

A gentler approach favored in Europe and Australia—an adjustable stomach band—can give long-term results that are almost as good and with far fewer risks. It may be the best option for children or women contemplating pregnancy, and is reversible if problems develop.

A radical operation—cutting away part of the stomach and rerouting the intestines—is increasingly being recommended for severely obese people. It gives maximum weight loss but also is the riskiest solution.

A large U.S. government study just got under way to compare all three options.

But regardless of which method is used, studies show an inescapable reality: No surgery gives lasting results unless people also change eating and exercising habits.

"The body just has many ways of compensating, even after something as drastic as surgery," said Dr. Louis Aronne, director of the weight loss program at Weill-Cornell Medical College.

He is president of the Obesity Society, the largest group of specialists in bariatrics, as this field is known. The group's recent annual conference in Vancouver featured many studies on surgery's long-term effects.

Obesity is a problem worldwide. About 31 percent of American adults—61 million people—are considered obese, with a body-mass index of 30 or more. That's based on height and weight. Someone who is 5 feet, 4 inches is obese at 175 pounds; 222 pounds does it for a 6-footer.

Federal guidelines say surgery shouldn't be considered unless someone has tried conventional ways to shed pounds and is at least 100 pounds over ideal weight, or has a BMI over 40, or a BMI over 35 plus a weight-related medical problem like diabetes or high blood pressure.

More people are meeting those conditions. A decade ago, less than 10,000 such surgeries were done in the United States. That ballooned to 70,000 in 2002 and more than 170,000 in 2005, says the American Society for Bariatric Surgery.

Doctors disagree over which is better: the most popular method, Roux-en-Y gastric bypass, or the adjustable band, which is rapidly gaining fans. Either can be done through a big incision, or laparoscopically with tiny instruments passed through small cuts in the abdomen.

In gastric bypass, a small pouch is stapled off from the rest of the stomach and connected to the small intestine. People eat less because the pouch holds little food, and they absorb fewer calories because much of the intestine is bypassed. They must take protein and vitamin supplements to prevent deficiencies.

Please see **OBESITY/3B**

