
*Letter to the Editor***Oral Contraceptive Use and Risk of Cancer—Letter**

Noel S. Weiss

In their systematic review of data about the possible association between use of oral contraceptives and the incidence of several forms of cancer, Gierisch and colleagues (1) systematically excluded studies published before 2000. Although those earlier studies likely represent the majority of evidence on the topic, the authors sought "to maximize the proportion of subjects who used oral contraceptive formulations similar to those on the market." I believe it is reasonable to ask whether any association between hormonal contraception and cancer incidence differs by hormone type, dose, route of administration,

etc., and analyses that sum up the data bearing on these questions (to the extent that they are available) would be a nice contribution. Unfortunately, as the authors acknowledge, "year of study publication" may be only weakly correlated with any particular feature of hormone exposure: no doubt many women included in the studies published after 1999 would have taken preparations that had been available a number of years earlier. In any case, rather than assuming that data from prior years would not be informative, both earlier-published and later-published data could be examined for possible differences in the presence and size of any associations found.

I suggest that most results obtained in epidemiologic studies have a "shelf life" of more than 13 years!

Author's Affiliation: Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center and the University of Washington, Seattle, Washington

Corresponding Author: Noel S. Weiss, University of Washington, Box 357236, Seattle, WA 98195. Phone: 206-685-1788; Fax: 206-543-8525; E-mail: nweiss@u.washington.edu

doi: 10.1158/1055-9965.EPI-13-1164

©2014 American Association for Cancer Research.

Disclosure of Potential Conflicts of Interest

No potential conflicts of interest were disclosed.

Received November 14, 2013; accepted January 21, 2014; published OnlineFirst March 17, 2014.

Reference

1. Gierisch JM, Coeytaux RR, Urrutia RP, Havrilesky LJ, Moorman PJ, Lowery WJ, et al. Oral contraceptive use and risk of breast, cervical,

colorectal, and endometrial cancers: a systematic review. *Cancer Epidemiol Biomarkers Prev* 2013;22:1931–43.

Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers & Prevention

Oral Contraceptive Use and Risk of Cancer—Letter

Noel S. Weiss

Cancer Epidemiol Biomarkers Prev 2014;23:676. Published OnlineFirst March 17, 2014.

Updated version Access the most recent version of this article at:
doi:[10.1158/1055-9965.EPI-13-1164](https://doi.org/10.1158/1055-9965.EPI-13-1164)

Cited articles This article cites 1 articles, 1 of which you can access for free at:
<http://cebp.aacrjournals.org/content/23/4/676.full#ref-list-1>

Citing articles This article has been cited by 1 HighWire-hosted articles. Access the articles at:
<http://cebp.aacrjournals.org/content/23/4/676.full#related-urls>

E-mail alerts [Sign up to receive free email-alerts](#) related to this article or journal.

Reprints and Subscriptions To order reprints of this article or to subscribe to the journal, contact the AACR Publications Department at pubs@aacr.org.

Permissions To request permission to re-use all or part of this article, use this link
<http://cebp.aacrjournals.org/content/23/4/676>.
Click on "Request Permissions" which will take you to the Copyright Clearance Center's (CCC) Rightslink site.