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The Use of Herbal Preparations to Alleviate Climacteric Disorders a

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## The use of herbal preparations to alleviate climacteric disorders and risk of postmenopausal breast cancer in a German case-control study.

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### Erratum in

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### Abstract

**BACKGROUND:** The use of **herbal preparations** (HEP) to **alleviate climacteric disorders** is expected to increase as women seek alternatives to menopausal hormone therapy to avoid the associated **breast cancer risk**. Data are sparse on the long-term effects of HEP containing phytoestrogens and black cohosh on **breast cancer risk**.

**METHODS:** Within a **German case-control study**, associations between patterns of HEP use and incident **breast cancer** were investigated in 10,121 **postmenopausal** women (3,464 cases, 6,657 controls). Information on HEP use was collected in face-to-face interviews supported by a list of brand names. Multivariate logistic and polytomous regression analyses were done.

**FINDINGS:** Ever use of HEP (9.9%) was inversely associated with invasive **breast cancer** [odds ratio (OR), 0.74; 95% confidence interval (CI), 0.63-0.87] in a dose-dependent manner (OR, 0.96 per year of use; P = 0.03). Classes of HEP did not differ significantly (P(heterogeneity) = 0.81). Risks for invasive ductal (OR, 0.72; 95% CI, 0.60-0.87) and combined lobular/mixed/tubular tumors (OR, 0.76; 95% CI, 0.58-1.01) were similarly reduced by any HEP use but not for in situ carcinomas (1.34; 95% CI, 0.86-2.09). There were no substantial differences in associations of HEP use by estrogen receptor status (ER(+) OR, 0.74; 95% CI, 0.62-0.89; ER- OR, 0.68, 95% CI, 0.50-0.93) and progesterone receptor status of the tumor.

**INTERPRETATION:** Our findings support the hypothesis that HEP use protects from invasive **breast cancer** in **postmenopausal** women. Among conceivable modes of action, those independent of estrogen receptor-mediated pathways seem to be involved (i.e., cytotoxicity, apoptosis).

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