

**POSTER ABSTRACTS**  
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**Cancer**  
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**Complications within One Year after Contralateral Prophylactic Mastectomy.**

Husson, Gail, M.P.H., M.Ed. - Kaiser Permanente Northern California  
West, Carmen N., M.H.A., M.S. - Kaiser Permanente Southern California  
Geiger, Ann M., Ph.D. - Kaiser Permanente Southern California  
Herrinton, Lisa, Ph.D. - Kaiser Permanente Northern California

**Background.** To reduce their risk of subsequent breast cancer, women with breast cancer may request prophylactic removal of their unaffected contralateral breast. The efficacy of this procedure is unclear and little is known about complications and long-term outcomes. **Methods.** For a study of contralateral prophylactic mastectomy efficacy we used automated hospitalization and cancer registry records to identify 1,074 women who underwent the procedure at one of six HMOs between 1979 and 1999. Medical records were abstracted to confirm the prophylactic mastectomy, ascertain complications and collect demographic and baseline data.

**Results.** Women with a contralateral prophylactic mastectomy had a mean age of 51 and were mostly Caucasian (85%). About half the women (51%) had at least one breast cancer risk factor. Half (50%) of the women presented with localized breast cancer, while 18% had in situ and 32% regional disease. In the first year after their contralateral prophylactic mastectomy 1,353 complications were identified in 625 (58%) of the women. The most severe physical problems were abscess, cellulitis or nipple exudate (120, 11% of all contralateral prophylactic mastectomies); lymphedema (63, 6%); necrosis (42, 4%); and loss of range of motion (35, 3%). Psychosocial problems included depression (41, 4%) and anxiety about appearance and sexuality (39, 4%).

**Conclusions.** While contralateral prophylactic mastectomy may reduce the risk of subsequent breast cancer, the procedure does carry some risk of complications. Women and their physicians need to weigh these risks with the potential benefits of contralateral prophylactic mastectomy.