

HPV virus linked to breast cancer

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A virus that can be sexually transmitted has been found in some patients with breast and other cancers, it was reported Sunday.

HPV, or human papilloma virus, already is implicated in most cervical cancers and has been linked to cancers of the larynx, skin, vulva, vagina, penis, anus and mouth.

In the latest study on breast cancer, it was found that younger women with breast cancer were more likely to have HPV-positive tissue than older women, said a report in the British Journal of Cancer.

Other researchers say more study is needed.

"It seems to me that the virus may well be harmless residents rather than having a causative relationship," said Alan Rickinson, cancer virus specialist at Birmingham University.

HPV is a family of more than 100 viruses. In cancer, viruses do not on their own cause disease, but may be a key link in a chain of events, reported the Independent.

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