



Newsletter, October 2025

BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

October is globally recognized as **Breast Cancer Awareness Month**. This is a time to reflect on the progress made in the fight against this disease and to acknowledge the challenges that remain.

The Global Picture

Worldwide, breast cancer remains the most commonly diagnosed cancer among women. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), in 2022 there were approximately 2.3 million new cases of breast cancer and about 670,000 deaths globally. Despite advances in early detection and treatment and improved outcomes, the overall burden continues to rise.

Projections indicate that by 2050, breast cancer cases could increase by 38%, with annual deaths expected to rise by 68%. This alarming trend underscores the need for ongoing global efforts in prevention, awareness, and equitable access to care, particularly in low and middle-income countries, where survival rates remain significantly lower.

Supporting Science That Saves Lives: Why Impact Cancer Foundation Stands Behind Professor Cathrin Brisken's Research

At the Impact Cancer Foundation, our mission is clear — to accelerate a cure for cancer by empowering the world's most promising scientists. We believe that every discovery made in a research laboratory



can become a life saved in the real world. This is why we are proud to support Professor Cathrin Brisken, a world-leading cancer researcher at the École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL) in Switzerland. Her pioneering work is transforming our understanding of how hormones influence breast cancer development, and ultimately, how we can prevent it.

Professor Brisken is one of the world's leading experts in breast cancer biology and hormonal regulation. Her research focuses on a critical question that affects millions of women worldwide: **How do progestins, the synthetic hormones used in birth control and hormone replacement therapy, influence breast cancer risk?**

Epidemiological studies have shown that hormones taken in these contexts can increase breast cancer risk. In Western countries alone, over one million breast cancer cases have been attributed to hormone replacement therapy (HRT). Yet, despite this staggering number, scientists still do not fully understand *why* or *how* these hormones affect breast tissue.

Professor Brisken and her team are determined to uncover these mechanisms. Using innovative humanized in vivo models, systems that mimic how human breast cells behave in the body, her lab studies how the body's natural progesterone and synthetic progestins act on breast cells. This research aims to identify which hormonal substances are safe and which may promote cancer.

Groundbreaking Discoveries and Why They Matter

Unlike most studies conducted in rodents, Prof. Brisken's lab uses human breast tissue obtained from voluntary medical donations, ensuring that the findings directly reflect women's biology. Her work has already shown that certain androgenic progestins (those that act on both progesterone and testosterone pathways) can trigger more cell proliferation than natural progesterone, potentially explaining why some hormonal treatments are riskier than others.

These discoveries could reshape how contraception and hormone therapy are prescribed, guiding safer medical decisions for women of all ages. The project also explores how hormones alter the microenvironment of breast tissue, a crucial factor in early cancer development. By revealing these biological mechanisms, Professor Brisken's research may lead to new cancer prevention strategies, more personalized treatments, and a significant reduction in global breast cancer risk.

Why Your Support Is Essential

This vital research takes time, resources, and sustained funding. Every experiment, every piece of data, brings us closer to protecting future generations from breast cancer. That is why the Impact Cancer Foundation is calling on donors, institutions, and compassionate individuals to help us fund Professor Brisken's ongoing work. Your donation will directly support laboratory research in Switzerland, helping to expand access to advanced models, analytical tools, and personnel needed to accelerate discovery. By contributing, you are not just funding a study; you are fueling hope, knowledge, and prevention.

Together, we can ensure that discoveries like Professor Brisken's reach the women who need them most. Together, we can turn science into survival.



Donate today to the Impact Cancer Foundation and help us advance the work of Professor Cathrin Brisken, because the future of women's health depends on the discoveries we make today.



Learn more on our website (www.impactcancer.org) about the two pioneer labs we've identified as our first partners on this journey. The groundbreaking work they are doing and the profound implications their discoveries hold for the future of cancer cures.

