

6<sup>th</sup> World Congress and Expo on  
**BREAST PATHOLOGY AND CANCER DIAGNOSIS**  
&  
20<sup>th</sup> International Conference on  
**MEDICINAL CHEMISTRY AND RATIONAL DRUGS**  
July 25-26, 2018 | Vancouver, Canada

**The risks of Triple Negative Breast Cancer (TNBC): The need for greater awareness, education & support**

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Deborah Zimmer Triple Negative Breast Cancer Foundation, Canada

**T**riple-Negative Breast Cancer (TNBC) tends to be more aggressive, more likely to recur or spread, and more difficult to treat. This is because most chemotherapies target one cancerous receptor, where as triple-negative breast cancer is diagnosed based upon the lack of three receptors known to fuel typical breast cancers. For patients with triple-negative breast cancer, prognosis is poor, and there are no targeted therapies available, leaving chemotherapy-based regimes as the only treatment option. Despite the best treatment plans, five-year disease-free survival rates for women with triple-negative breast cancer are about 50%, and nearly all patients who develop distant metastasis die of the disease. So is true in the case of Deborah Zimmer, who was diagnosed incorrectly with stage 4-breast cancer in 2013 and shortly there after underwent a double mastectomy followed by a year of chemotherapy treatments and radiation. It came as a shock in 2014 uncovering that her cancer had metastasized and she was triple-negative breast cancer positive all along. Deborah underwent a second round of unsuccessful chemotherapy treatments and sadly, she passed away from Leptomeningeal Carcinomatosis in September, 2015. This was a devastating and exasperated journey for Deborah and her family driving the establishment of the Deborah Zimmer Triple Negative Breast Cancer Foundation based the evident need to aid in the areas of awareness, education and support surrounding triple-negative breast cancer. Currently, researchers are working to identify novel drug targets and treatment strategies to more effectively treat, manage and hopefully cure triple-negative breast cancer. This is something the Mayo Clinic Breast Cancer SPORE (Specialized Program of Research Excellence) is working to achieve. Much of the research is in its preliminary testing phases, namely, immunotherapy, which has demonstrated responsiveness in some patients with triple-negative breast cancer, signalling a potential role for immunotherapy in this tumor type. Secondly, the therapeutic activation of ER $\beta$ , this project arose from the discovery that up to 30% of triple-negative breast cancer tumors express a second form of the estrogen receptor known as ER $\beta$  and it is hypothesized that therapeutic activation of ER $\beta$  will result in clinical benefits for patients with ER $\beta$ -positive triple-negative breast cancer. Lastly, genetic testing for mutations in breast cancer predisposition genes is a crucial study for triple-negative breast cancer prevention. Women found to have mutations in the cancer genetic panel genes will receive accurate information about their risks of cancer. This is expected to lead to improvements in the use of mammography screening, MRI screening and prophylactic surgeries as it relates to triple-negative breast cancer. The need for quality triple-negative breast cancer prevention and treatment plans is at the top of many oncologist lists, but there is a great deal more work that must be done.

**Biography**

Deborah Zimmer Triple Negative Breast Cancer Foundation .The Deborah Zimmer Triple Negative Breast Cancer Foundation was established in 2016 by Deborah's husband and daughters as the first foundation in Canada with a specific mandate to provide greater support, education and awareness surrounding the lack of targeted triple-negative breast cancer treatment plans.

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