

# *My Sister's Song*

## *Medicalizing Young Women - A Dangerous Trend*

by

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Excerpted from Dr. Sellman's newly released book

*“What Women MUST Know To Protect Their Daughters From Breast Cancer”*

These days, young women are besieged by many challenges. Social pressures, economic concerns, health problems, schoolwork, and family tensions all tilt the stress barometer into the dangerous red zone. Skipping meals, eating junk food along with starvation diets have become a way of life for teenagers. More than ever, young women seem to be burning the candle at both ends.

Women's life styles and behaviors directly affect their physical and emotional wellbeing, both for the short and long term. It's no wonder that their hormonal health is under attack. Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS), painful periods, irregular or absent periods, ovarian cysts, polycystic ovaries, fibrocystic breast disease (lumpy, painful breasts) endometriosis, hormonal migraines, fibroids, acne, allergies, fatigue and mood swings are occurring in young women at epidemic rates. Many girls try to ignore their health problems hoping they will disappear. Others schedule appointments with their doctors. Odds on, they will leave the doctor's office with either a prescription drug or some version of the Birth Control Pill.

Rather than perceiving hormonal imbalances as aberrations created by the many abuses of modern life. Medicine has convinced women that menstruation itself, is the problem and those natural menstrual cycles are dangerous, disease producing and require medical intervention. Doctors have also convinced many women that their ovaries are the villains behind their health problems and emotional turmoil. The solution: shut it down. The method: some form of birth control!

The erroneous notion that menstruation is a rather unpleasant, toxic process has been around for a hundreds, if not thousands of years. So has the belief that the source of a woman's suffering resides within her ovaries, uterus and her menstrual flow.

In a syndicated column written by a well-known Australian doctor a reader asked the following question. “My doctor told me recently that monthly periods were now regarded by some as a ‘disease’ and totally preventable. Is this true?” His reply. “Why should women be burdened with loss of valuable blood each month, which is often not manufactured in similar amounts, often leading to anemia and chronic tiredness? Taking the active ingredients of the oral contraceptive pill daily, with no seven-day break solves the problem.”

The sentiment that periods are a disease - or at least a most unwelcome, unproven and unsafe physiological process - reflects a growing trend amongst both physicians and pharmaceutical companies to promote the theory that menstrual cycles should be eliminated.

Leading the charge to eradicate menstruation is Dr. Elsimar Coutinho, Professor of Gynecology, Obstetrics and Human Reproduction in Brazil. In his book, “Is Menstruation Obsolete?” Dr. Coutinho argues that monthly bleeding is not the “natural” state of women and that actually places them at risk of various medical conditions. The author maintains that menstruation is neither medically meaningful nor sound. He asserts that prehistoric women had fewer than 160 periods in their lifetime. On the other hand, modern women, start menstruating earlier, and spend less time pregnant, and have more than 400 menstrual cycles.

Dr. Coutinho believes that women should be able to choose the timing and frequency of their periods. In addition to perceiving menstruation as a failed process, he also contends that it is devoid of beneficial effects and may even be harmful to women's health. Coutinho's work suggests that the most medically advanced "treatment" for menstruation would be its total cessation in all reproductive- aged women.

According to Dr. Coutinho, the profoundly complicated reproductive system that has taken millions of years of evolutionary fine-tuning has now been declared obsolete and harmful. Medical science is about to provide the rationale and the means to make menstruation completely disappear. The solutions are simple: just give all women a continuous low dose birth control pill which is used continuously for 84 days followed by a seven-day break. This will allow only 4 bleeds a year. (By mimicking pregnancy, the Pill literally shuts down the ovaries, and causes a forced bleed each month not a natural menstrual cycle).

Physicians and researchers alike have enthusiastically embraced Dr. Coutinho's theory. They see no reason why all women wouldn't want to have fewer periods. Whether is a problem such as migraines or the just the "inconvenience and messiness" of menstruation, the Pill can now come to the rescue

Now that "medical advances" have conquered menstruation and drug companies' glossy marketing campaigns have succeeded in extolling the Pill's virtuosity, what has actually been achieved? What does the future portend for all the young women presently seduced by these promises? Does the Pill really improve a woman's health? Or, will it contribute to a health catastrophe of unparalleled proportions?

#### The Shocking Facts About the Pill -

The pill has become the most popular method for birth control. But, in recent years, oral contraceptives have increasingly been prescribed to young women for noncontraceptive purposes. The Pill has become the darling of the medical world for treating just about any hormonal problem a girl may have and then some. To date, the Pill is prescribed for acne, to "regulate" periods, for heavy bleeding, and painful periods, to treat PMS, endometriosis, migraines, ovarian cysts and polycystic ovaries. The Pill is even prescribed to girls as young as thirteen for acne.

The Pill is said to be one of the safest drugs around. But is it?

In December 2002, the US government published its biannual Report on Carcinogens that added all steroidal estrogens to the list of "known" human carcinogens. The gravity of this finding cannot be overstated: all estrogens used in HRT and oral contraceptives have now been proven, unequivocally, to cause cancer!

To make matters even worse, synthetic progesterone (proteins) such as Provera or Depo-Provera, used in HRT, oral contraceptives, injections and implants are also listed as carcinogens.

This is the indisputable fact: the ingredients of the Pill, whatever its formulation, cause cancer. How can any carcinogens be deemed safe especially when given to vulnerable young women? Studies have linked estrogens and progestins to breast, ovarian, endometrial, cervical, skin, brain and lung cancers.

There is nothing natural about taking the Pill. As a result of the Pill, a woman's ovaries may be permanently damaged, resulting in infertility. Fabio Bertarelli, a billionaire manufacturer of fertility drugs told the Wall Street Journal: "Our usual customers are women over 30 who have been taking birth-control pills since they were teenagers or in their early 20's."

Contraception formulas also increase the risk of coronary artery disease, immune dysfunction, liver toxicity, strokes, blood clots, osteoporosis, gum disease, high blood pressure and ectopic pregnancies. The side-effects include nausea, vomiting, migraine-type headaches, breast tenderness, allergies, weight increases, changes in

sex drive, depression, head hair loss, facial hair growth, colitis, Crohn's disease and increased incidence of vaginitis. Many of these effects may persist long after the discontinuation of the Pill.

In addition, the Pill depletes Vitamin B1, B2, B6, Folic Acid, B 12, vitamins C, E, K, zinc, selenium, magnesium and the amino acid tyrosine, essential for proper thyroid function.

Even more alarming is the fact that the earlier a woman uses the Pill the greater the risk of developing breast cancer and also having a worse prognosis. One disturbing study showed that the Pill caused chromosomal aberrations in the breast tissue of young female users. This research was further backed up with a study showing that there was a 100 percent increased risk of breast cancer, which extended from 10 years of pill use down to just three months! So, it is of no surprise that women as young as 17 years old, are now being diagnosed with breast cancer.

In one landmark study, researchers found that women who took the Pill before the age of 20 and were later diagnosed with breast cancer, have tumors with the worse prognoses than do breast cancer patients who started taking the Pill at a later age or had not previously taken it. Another study found this most terrifying result: the younger the women were at the time of diagnosis, the greater the possibility they would die within five years.

Echoing these findings, the U.S. National Cancer Institute published a study in 2003 showing that the risk of breast cancer was significantly increased for women between the ages of 20-34 who had used the Pill for at least six months.

Progestins make their own mischief, raising "bad" cholesterol and blood pressure, altering sugar metabolism, compromising the immune system, and creating undesirable masculinizing effects. One study found that women who used Depo-Provera before the age of 25 increased their relative risk of breast cancer by 50 percent and for women using it for six or more years; their risk was raised significantly to 320 percent.

Of further concern are studies showing that oral contraceptives and Depo-Provera contribute to bone loss in adolescents.

With the arrival of the continuous low dose Pill, normal menstrual cycles are now fair game for the drug companies. This option appeals to many young women who believe that menstrual cycles are, indeed, "a curse" and an unnecessary inconvenience. Nutritionally depleted diets, stress and environmental toxins, the real culprits of menstrual irregularities and hormonal imbalances, have been all but ignored by doctors who prefer to opt for a quick drug fix.

Getting healthy is really the challenge before us. Understanding the immense importance of a healthy diet, good nutritional support, exercise, relaxation techniques along with the guidance of competent holistic health practitioners is the only way to truly assist young women to regain their hormonal health and ensure their fertility.

Should menstruation, an intrinsic expression of a woman's physiological and psychological self, ever be made obsolete? Absolutely not!

Dr. Sherrill Sellman is an internationally acclaimed lecturer and best selling author of "Hormone Heresy" and "What Women MUST Know To Protect Their Daughters From Breast Cancer". To subscribe to Sherrill's free monthly newsletter go to <http://www.whatwomenmustknow.com>. She can be contacted at [golight@earthlink.net](mailto:golight@earthlink.net).