

Elle Macpherson's Breast Cancer Story Lacks Vital Details

Media reports about supermodel Macpherson's cancer journey omitted crucial information about the type of breast cancer she had and more.

September 18, 2024 By Laura Schmidt

Australian supermodel Elle Macpherson recently shared that she was diagnosed with [breast cancer](#) years ago and is now in remission despite forgoing [chemotherapy](#); however, her story lacks vital details, [The Guardian reports](#).

In an interview with [Australian Women's Weekly magazine](#), Macpherson, 60, said she was diagnosed with HER2-positive estrogen-receptive intraductal carcinoma in 2017. Although she underwent a lumpectomy, a [standard medical treatment](#) for breast cancer that involves removing a cancerous breast lump, she did not follow conventional medical advice for the rest of her treatment. Instead, Macpherson said she followed "an intuitive, heart-led, holistic approach."

Macpherson's type of cancer may more accurately be described as a form of noninvasive precancer that, if left untreated, has the potential to become aggressive, according to cancer surgeon Chris Pyke, PhD, director of medical services at the Mater private hospitals in Brisbane, Australia, reports The Guardian.

Pyke noted that only about 5% of HER2-positive estrogen-receptive intraductal carcinoma cases turn into invasive cancer during the next year. HER2-positive describes cells that express a protein called HER2 on their surface; too much of the protein can cause cells to grow too fast.

The United States' [National Cancer Institute describes intraductal breast carcinoma](#) (also known as ductal carcinoma in situ) as "a condition in which abnormal cells are found in the lining of a breast duct. The abnormal cells have not spread outside the duct to other tissues in the breast. In some cases, intraductal breast carcinoma may become invasive breast cancer and spread to other tissues. At this time, there is no way to know which abnormal cells could become invasive."

Initial media reports were based on Macpherson's interview with Women's Weekly about the launch of her new book and lacked detail about the size of the precancer or grade of the cells.

In describing potential treatments, Pyke said, "On top of just removing it, for this particular type of disease, sometimes radiotherapy is added, and we can help guide patients on that depending on how big the area of precancerous change was, what the grade of the cells were, and sometimes there's gene expression profiling that can be added on top of that to help make decisions and inform risk."

Additionally, it is not known whether Macpherson's precancer was detected because she discovered a lump in her breast or because she underwent cancer screening, which would lead to different treatment recommendations.

In related news, [Boy Meets World star Danielle Fishel shared this summer that she was diagnosed with Stage 0 breast cancer](#) following a routine mammogram. Stage 0 is another name for ductal carcinoma in situ. On Instagram, she posted a video stressing the importance of cancer screenings and early detection.

Most patients with Stage 0 breast cancer have been cured, and the [10-year survival rate](#) is 98%. In most cases, the tumor is removed, and radiation therapy is administered afterward.

"The biggest thing for breast cancer, until we find the cause, is that early diagnosis is the most important thing," Pyke said. "If you find breast cancer, even invasive cancer, early before you can feel it, there's very little chance it's going to shorten your life."

To read more, click [#Breast Cancer](#). There, you'll find headlines such as "[Despite Advances, Breast Cancer Remains the Number 1 Cancer Among Women](#)," "[Start Breast Cancer Screening at Age 40?](#)" and "[New Studies Show How Post-Treatment Lifestyle Choices Shape Long-Term Outcomes After Breast Cancer Diagnosis](#)."