

Nighttime light linked to cancer

An Israeli study said women who live in well-lighted neighborhoods are more likely to develop breast cancer than those who live in darker areas.

The findings of the study, which combined satellite images with local breast cancer statistics, support the theory that too much light at night raises the risk of breast cancer by interfering with the production of melatonin, The Washington Post reported Wednesday.

The findings are published in the online version of the journal Chronobiology International.

Lead author Itai Kloog of the University of Haifa said satellite data showing how much light was emitted from neighborhoods throughout Israel was overlaid with local statistics on cases of breast cancer. The researchers found the breast cancer rate in areas with average night lighting to be 37 percent higher than in communities with the lowest amount of light.

Epidemiological studies of nurses, flight attendants and others who work at night have found breast cancer rates 60 percent above normal and an arm of the World Health Organization recently decided to classify shift work as a "probable carcinogen," the newspaper said.

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