Women with Early-stage Breast Cancer

Background and Aim

- Breast cancer affects not only physical health but also psychological and emotional well-being.
- Among the various aspects that impact the quality of life of breast cancer patients, sexual well-being and body image in terms of breast satisfaction play a crucial role.
- Unfortunately, these aspects are often overlooked and undervalued in healthcare, leading to inadequate care and support for breast cancer patients.
- Aims:
  - To determine the factors that influence breast satisfaction and sexual well-being in early-stage breast cancer patients who have recently received a cancer diagnosis.
  - To offer providers a more patient-centered and comprehensive approach to breast cancer care.

Methods and Materials

- This prospective questionnaire-based study screened 236 early-stage breast cancer patients at a university-affiliated community hospital in Michigan.
- Participants were interviewed using structured telephone interviews after their recent diagnosis of breast cancer and prior to undergoing surgical intervention.
- A validated BREAST-Q questionnaire was used, and their scores were converted to equivalent Rasch scores for interpretation (0–worst, 100=best).
- Pre-existing medical conditions, social history, and other variables were collected through electronic medical records review and confirmed by interview.
- Statistical analyses were performed using SPSS version 20.0, and a p-value less than 0.05 was considered statistically significant.

Results

- Of 175 patients initially screened, 56 met the selection criteria. 75% (N=42) participated, while 25% (N=14) were excluded as they declined to participate or were unreachable via telephone.
- Mean breast satisfaction score of participants: 67.1 (N=42) vs. 64.5 (N=38).

BREAST SATISFACTION

- Type of surgery was observed to be significantly related to the breast satisfaction of patients.
- Interestingly, patients who chose mastectomy had higher breast satisfaction scores (75.6 ± 62.9, p<0.05) and were relatively younger (58.9 ± 8.8 years vs. 66.7 ± 10.5 years, p<0.02) than those undergoing lumpectomy.
- No other demographic factors (race, education, marital status, BMI), social history (smoking), bra size, or pre-existing medical conditions (hypertension, diabetes) were found to affect breast satisfaction among these patients.

SEXUAL WELLBEING

- On the other hand, age had a negative correlation with sexual satisfaction (mean age 64 years, p<0.05), while income had a positive correlation (mean income $76,170 annually, p<0.05).
- No other variables were significantly associated with patients’ sexual well-being.

Table 2. Correlation between Age and Patient’s Breast Satisfaction and Sexual Wellbeing Rasch score

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (N=42)</th>
<th>Rasch score</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breast</td>
<td>0.022</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Correlation between Income and Patient’s Breast Satisfaction and Sexual Wellbeing Rasch score

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INCOME (N=28)</th>
<th>Rasch score</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breast</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusions

- The study revealed that the patient’s sexual well-being was significantly associated with age and income, while breast satisfaction was only related to the type of surgery.
- As younger women would be more inclined to have a mastectomy, perhaps more education regarding survival and addressing patient’s concerns may lead to different outcomes in the future.
- These findings underscore the importance of considering multiple aspects of a patient’s life when designing a comprehensive treatment plan following a cancer diagnosis.
- By providing additional support and resources tailored to these specific needs, healthcare providers can enhance patient’s overall quality of life and promote greater satisfaction with their treatment outcomes.

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Exploring Factors Associated with Sexual Well-being and Breast Satisfaction Among
Women with Early-stage Breast Cancer

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References


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