

SPECIAL PAPER

Quality of Life in Women with Breast Cancer

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Abstract

Background: Breast cancer is one of the most common cancers in women. The term quality of life is difficult to define and has been defined in several ways. It is reported that diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer can affect health-related quality of life to a great extent

Purpose: The purpose of the present study was to review literature on quality of life and breast cancer patients.

Results: Women suffering from breast cancer may experience side effects during their treatment, such as fatigue, anemia, hot flashes, skin reactions etc. Also, they experience psychological distress, including restlessness and depression during diagnosis, treatment and also during the post-treatment period. A supportive social system that a woman suffering from breast cancer has seems to play a crucial part in the adaptation to the disease and to the subsequent distress experienced. In addition to, when she reaches the end of her life, the patient needs to satisfy her spiritual needs.

Conclusions: Health professionals need to have good knowledge of the quality of life of cancer patients in order to meet their needs after diagnosis and during their treatment. There is a great need for further research in Greece, in order to determine the factors that influence the quality of life in breast cancer patients.

Key words: quality of life, breast cancer, women, symptoms