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Quality of life and sexuality in palliative breast cancer patients

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Objective: To examine the quality of life of breast cancer patients undergoing palliative care, with a special focus on the connection between intimate life and emotional balance, identifying the difficulties and influences that impact the maintenance of closeness and the affective manifestations of this group of patients. **Methods:** This is a study with a mixed approach, integrating qualitative and quantitative methods to capture individual perceptions and measurable data on quality of life and sexuality. The descriptive study was conducted by analyzing original articles in Portuguese, obtained from databases such as the Virtual Health Library, SciELO, PubMed, and Revista Eletrônica Acervo Saúde (Electronic Journal Health Collection), published between 2020 and 2024. The descriptors “palliative cancer patient”, “sexuality”, “palliative care”, “quality of life”, and “breast cancer” were used. Of the 15 publications available for critical analysis, seven were evaluated. **Results:** The impacts of the disease directly influence the patient’s life in a way that requires more humanized and holistic care. Therefore, the interdisciplinary team helps significantly in controlling the symptoms of palliative breast cancer patients, while also recognizing sexual needs. In addition, they provide essential emotional support, making care more welcoming, and guiding some strategies in consultations to improve the patient’s sexuality. These strategies include addressing sexuality as part of the treatment, guiding the patient to practice exercises to regain confidence in the sexual response, including partners in support programs, and making the maintenance of healthy habits, such as the regular practice of physical activities. **Conclusion:** Finally, it is clear that the late diagnosis of breast cancer combined with communication failures between professionals hampers the planning of the care provided. The literature therefore recommends using creative and multidisciplinary approaches to deepen the understanding of subjective aspects and ensure comprehensive care that leads to more positive therapeutic results.

Keywords: breast cancer; quality of life; sexuality; palliative care.