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# 554 - QUALITY OF LIFE OF YOUNG WOMEN WITH BREAST CANCER IN A REFERENCE HOSPITAL IN PARAÍBA

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**Introduction:** Breast cancer is the main cancer in women in Brazil and worldwide, it and is the leading cause of death among women in Brazil. Although it is more common in women over 40 years, when it occurs in younger women, it generally has a worse prognosis, thus leading to more aggressive treatments and generating more long-term sequelae.

**Objective:** The aim of this research was to analyze the quality of life of women breast cancer survivors under 40 years of age.

**Methods:** This is an observational, cross-sectional study that was carried out at the Hospital Napoleão Laureano, which is the reference for the treatment of breast cancer in Paraíba. The project was submitted to the Research Ethics Committee of the Centro de Ciências Médicas of the Universidade Federal da Paraíba, and the patients signed an informed consent form. Data collection was performed between September 2020 and February 2021. We had to conduct most of the interviews by telephone, because the COVID-19 pandemic decreased the flow of patients to the outpatient clinic.

**Results:** In this time period, we identified 76 patients who fit the inclusion criteria for the survey, and from these, we obtained 47 responses to the quality of life questionnaire. Among those who answered the survey, only four had not yet had any surgical procedure on their breasts. Of the 43 women who had undergone surgery, most still suffer from pain (27.6%) or discomfort (63.8%) in the area of the breasts and upper limbs, and 63.8% also feel a decrease in the strength of this homolateral upper limb. This is very important data, because pain is responsible for a great decrease in quality of life, so much so that chronic pain can lead to symptoms of depression in breast cancer survivors. In the second part of the questionnaire, we asked about body image, since the breast region is generally a very important area of women's bodies. More than 70% of the interviewees feel beautiful and satisfied with their sex life; often related to the support they are receiving, be it from family, friends, health professionals, or even from social media. Even so, they have noticed a drop in libido, which is a common side effect of chemotherapy, a topic not usually addressed in medical consultations. They were asked about their desire to have children, since many cancer treatments can lead to premature ovarian failure, early menopause, and infertility; 36% of them said that the diagnosis changed their desire to get pregnant, demonstrating that the issue of fertility is not being properly addressed among these women, since fertility preservation options are not even available in the Brazilian public health service. Another issue addressed was the socioeconomic issues related to the diagnosis and treatment of the disease, considering that in Brazil, women are responsible for the family income in more than half of the households. Although cancer treatment in Brazil is free of charge, 68% of the women had to stop work or take a medical leave, and about 78% of them said that their financial conditions worsened during the treatment, increasing their worries in this already extremely stressful period.

**Conclusion:** The evolution of therapies in the treatment of breast cancer has allowed a considerable survival rate for this disease. Thus, the management of the sequelae of the disease and treatment, and the quality of life of these women survivors, also becomes the responsibility of the health team, so that studies on this are fundamental to provide better assistance.