



Analysing the Psychological Impact of Breast Cancer Diagnosis and Its Treatment

Faulin Pareen*

Department of Oncology, University Medical Center, Utrecht, The Netherlands

*Corresponding Author: Faulin Pareen, Department of Oncology, University Medical Center, Utrecht, The Netherlands; E-mail: faulin_pareen@umc22.nl

Received date: 21 July, 2024, Manuscript No. JCEOG-24-148875;

Editor assigned date: 23 July, 2024, PreQC No. JCEOG-24-148875 (PQ);

Reviewed date: 06 August, 2024, QC No. JCEOG-24-148875;

Revised date: 13 August, 2024, Manuscript No. JCEOG-24-148875 (R);

Published date: 20 August, 2024, DOI: 10.4172/2324-9110.1000419

Description

A breast cancer diagnosis is often a life-altering event that brings emotional, psychological and physical challenges. While the medical aspects of breast cancer treatment receive significant attention, the psychological impact of the diagnosis and its subsequent treatment can be equally important. Patients often experience a range of emotions, including fear, anxiety, depression and a sense of loss. These emotional responses are further compounded by the side effects of treatments such as surgery, chemotherapy, radiation and hormonal therapy, which can affect body image, mental health and overall quality of life. A breast cancer diagnosis triggers an immediate emotional response, often characterized by shock, disbelief and fear. Women diagnosed with breast cancer typically experience intense feelings of vulnerability and uncertainty about their future.

These initial reactions are common as patients try to process the information and understand the implications of their diagnosis. The uncertainty surrounding prognosis, treatment options and survival rates can heighten feelings of anxiety and stress. One of the most significant psychological effects is the fear of death or recurrence of cancer. Even after successful treatment, the possibility of recurrence can persist causing ongoing stress and anxiety. Patients may constantly worry about future health complications, making it difficult for them to regain a sense of normalcy. The fear of mortality can manifest in many ways, including insomnia, difficulty concentrating and emotional withdrawal.

Breast cancer treatments such as mastectomy, lumpectomy and radiation can alter a woman's body image significantly. Loss of a breast or changes in physical appearance can lead to feelings of diminished femininity and self-worth. Many women struggle with a sense of loss and identity after undergoing surgery. Hair loss, weight changes and other physical side effects of chemotherapy further impact self-esteem. These bodily changes can make patients feel alienated from their former selves, often resulting in depression or social isolation.

Depression is a common psychological reaction to breast cancer. Studies indicate that up to 25% of women diagnosed with breast cancer experience clinical depression during or after treatment. The

dominating nature of the disease, combined with the stress of treatment and its side effects, often results in feelings of hopelessness, sadness and a lack of motivation. Anxiety disorders are also prevalent, with patients feeling overwhelmed by uncertainties related to their health, financial stability and the impact on their loved ones. Chemotherapy, a common treatment for breast cancer, has a significant psychological effect due to its severe physical side effects.

The nausea, fatigue, hair loss and other side effects can impair a patient's mental health over time. Chemotherapy-induced fatigue, often persistent and severe can significantly impact a patient's ability to maintain daily routines, leading to feelings of frustration and helplessness. The "Chemo brain" phenomenon, characterized by cognitive impairment and memory loss, can also increase feelings of frustration and anxiety. Patients often report difficulty concentrating, forgetfulness and a general sense of mental fog, all of which can interfere with daily life and reduce the ability to work or maintain relationships.

Surgical interventions, whether mastectomy or lumpectomy, can deeply affect a patient's perception of her body and sense of self. Breast reconstruction, while helpful for some, does not fully erase the emotional trauma associated with body image disturbances. The decision to undergo reconstruction itself can be fraught with anxiety, as patients weigh the risks and benefits in the context of their ongoing emotional distress. Hormonal therapies used in breast cancer treatment can cause emotional and psychological side effects, including mood swings, irritability and depression. These therapies, which often involve the reduction or blocking of estrogen, can induce menopause-like symptoms such as hot flashes and night sweats.

These changes can contribute to feelings of distress and can strain personal relationships, further adding to the psychological burden of treatment. The rigorous nature of breast cancer treatment can lead to social isolation. Patients may withdraw from social activities or feel that others cannot understand what they are going through. This isolation can be worsening by the physical effects of treatment, such as fatigue or hair loss which may make patients self-conscious in social settings. Furthermore, while family and friends often provide emotional support, the patient's experience can sometimes lead to feelings of loneliness. Even in supportive environments patients may feel misunderstood or overwhelmed by well-intentioned but unhelpful comments. This sense of isolation can deepen the psychological distress associated with breast cancer.

Conclusion

The psychological impact of breast cancer diagnosis and treatment is extensive and diverse. While medical treatments focus on the physical aspects of the disease, emotional and psychological care is equally important in the healing process. Fear, anxiety, depression and body image concerns are common but manageable with proper support, counseling. Providing a comprehensive approach that includes emotional and psychological care alongside medical treatment can improve the overall well-being and quality of life for breast cancer patients. By treating the mental health challenges associated with breast cancer, one can provide patients not only a longer life but also a more fulfilling and emotionally balanced one.

Citation: Pareen F (2024) *Analysing the Psychological Impact of Breast Cancer Diagnosis and Its Treatment*. J Clin Exp Oncol 13:2.