

Health-related quality of life in patients with breast cancer in Palestine: an assessment of a cross-sectional study using the EuroQoL-5 dimensions scale

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Abstract

Background The negative effect of breast cancer on survivors highlights the importance of increased knowledge about patients' health-related quality of life (HRQOL). The aim of this study was to assess HRQOL in women with breast cancer and to examine the effect of patient characteristics on HRQOL.

Methods This cross-sectional study took place in four oncology centres in the West Bank, occupied Palestinian territory, during a 6 month period in 2014. We used a convenient sampling method to recruit participants and the EuroQoL-5 Dimension (EuroQoL EQ-5D) scale to assess their HRQOL. All analyses were done in SPSS version 16.0. The study was approved by the Institutional Review Board at An-Najah National University. Informed verbal consent was obtained from the participants before the start of the study.

Findings 244 women with breast cancer were interviewed. Their mean age was 52.7 years (SD 12.2), and the mean number of years of breast cancer was 3.38 years (SD 3.6). 136 (56%) women had stage 2 breast cancer, and 54 (22%) women had stage 3 breast cancer. 233 (96%) participants received chemotherapy, and 206 (84%) participants had surgery. The median EQ-5D index was 0.72 (IQR 0.51–0.84), and the median of EQ-visual analogue scale (EQ-VAS) was 70 (IQR 55–80). We found a positive correlation between the EQ-5D index and EQ-VAS scores ($R=0.51$; $p<0.001$). The highest EQ-5D index scores were found in elderly patients ($p=0.006$), employed women ($p=0.002$), women with high income ($p=0.012$), women with higher education ($p=0.001$), and women who exercised regularly ($p=0.006$). Additionally, patients with advanced disease stage had the lowest median EQ-5D index ($p=0.002$).

Interpretation Palestinian women who had survived breast cancer reported favourable overall HRQOL. Increased educational attainments, monthly income, and physical activity was associated with improved overall HRQOL. Thus, improved overall HRQOL should be considered a very important goal in treatment of breast cancer.

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Contributors

SWA-J had the idea for the study, led the study design, data analysis, and interpretation, and drafted the Abstract. RY, RS, HJ, WM, MD, and AB interviewed patients, participated in data interpretation, and contributed to the drafting of the Abstract. SHZ and WMS had the idea for the study, participated in the study design, and contributed important intellectual content during the revision of the Abstract. All authors have seen and approved the final version of the Abstract for publication.

Declaration of interests

We declare no competing interests.

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