

Quality of life during the first year after breast cancer resection

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Quality of life can be determined by a number of factors, including subjective perception of various spheres of health and health-unrelated factors.

Purpose: To compare the quality of life of women who had breast cancer one month and one year after mastectomy, and to verify the usefulness of health-related quality of life (HRQoL) scales in early identification of patients having problems in various functional spheres.

Materials and methods: The study included the group of 110 mastectomized women. Quality of life of the participants was estimated with EORTC QLQ-C30 and EORTC QLQ-BR23 questionnaires.

Results: Global health status (QoL) determined with the aid of the EORTC QLQ-C30 questionnaire turned out to be significantly higher in women surveyed one year after mastectomy than in those examined one month after the surgery (74.23 vs. 58.33, $p < 0.001$).

Moreover, the two groups of patients differed significantly in terms of physical, cognitive, social and role functioning scores. Most of the symptoms assessed were resolved within a year after the breast cancer surgery. No significant intergroup differences were revealed with regard to emotional and socioeconomic functioning or future perspective scores.

Conclusions: Quality of life of most mastectomized women improves considerably within one year after the surgery. The use of quality of life instruments can be useful in early postoperative identification of patients who score low on functional and symptom scales. Such patients require support and/or psycho-oncological treatment during the early postoperative period. Quality of life of breast cancer patients during the early postoperative period can be a predictor of this parameter in a longer-term perspective.

Key words: Breast cancer, quality of life, questionnaires.
