

Functional complications in patients after surgery for breast cancer: A comprehensive review

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ABSTRACT

Breast cancer is one of the most common neoplasms among women and its surgical treatment often results in functional complications such as pain, lymphedema and mobility restriction. The review highlighted the need for integrated rehabilitation approaches, including physiotherapy and psychological support, to improve patients' quality of life after surgery. The study highlights the importance of proper management of sequelae to optimize the recovery and well-being of affected women.

Keywords: Breast cancer, Dysfunction, Treatment.

INTRODUCTION

Breast cancer is one of the most prevalent malignant tumor types among women worldwide (Roy *et al.*, 2023). Early diagnosis, through screening programs, has been crucial to improve prognosis and reduce mortality, allowing for less invasive and more effective treatments (Katsura *et al.*, 2022). Therapeutic approaches include conservative surgeries or mastectomies, complemented by chemotherapy, radiotherapy, and hormone therapy, depending on the stage and individual characteristics of the cancer (Katsura *et al.*, 2022; Gama *et al.*, 2024).

In Brazil, breast cancer has been the most common neoplasm among women since 1979, with rates varying by region, highlighting the significant impact in the South and Southeast regions (Matos, Rabelo, Peixoto., 2021). Regardless of the type of surgical procedure, patients often face postoperative complications such as pain, restrictions in upper limb mobility, and changes in breast sensitivity. These

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functional changes are crucial to better understand the needs for rehabilitation and the promotion of quality of life after surgical treatment of breast cancer (Campos *et al.*, 2022).

The objective of this literature review is to verify in the literature the main functional alterations in women after surgical treatment for breast cancer.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

To achieve the objectives of this study, a literature review was conducted. We selected 10 articles available in electronic databases such as *PubMed*, *Scopus* and *Google Scholar*, using the following search terms: "Breast cancer", "Dysfunction" and "Treatment".

The inclusion criteria included studies published in the last 3 years, in Portuguese and English, that specifically addressed the functional consequences of surgical treatment of breast cancer in adult women. Articles that did not meet these criteria were excluded from the analysis.

RESULTS

This comprehensive study revealed a significant prevalence of functional alterations in women undergoing surgical treatment for breast cancer in the Brazilian context. Among the most frequently observed complications are shoulder joint dysfunctions, upper limb lymphedema, and sleep disorders, as well as postural changes and impaired sensitivity (Roy *et al.*, 2023; Katsura *et al.*, 2022; Gama *et al.*, 2024; Vieira, Braz, Silva., 2021).

These conditions not only adversely impact patients' quality of life, but also profoundly influence their physical and emotional functionality, exacerbating issues of self-esteem and body image (Moreira *et al.*, 2021; Bravo *et al.*, 2021; Ribeiro *et al.*, 2023).

The review highlighted the importance of integrated rehabilitation approaches, which include specialized physiotherapy, psychological support, and nutritional guidance, to mitigate these adverse effects and promote a more complete and satisfactory recovery for women after surgical treatment for breast cancer (Matos, Rabelo, Peixoto., 2021; Campos *et al.*, 2022; Dias *et al.*, 2022).

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Women undergoing surgical treatment for breast cancer often face significant functional challenges, such as shoulder joint dysfunction, upper limb lymphedema, and sleep disturbances, affecting their postoperative quality of life. Health professionals, especially physiotherapists, must be prepared to identify and manage these complications in a way that facilitates recovery and improves the functionality of patients.



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