

## **Effect of Psychosocial, Behavioural and Disease Characteristics on Health-Related Quality of Life after Breast Cancer Surgery: A Cross-Sectional Study of a Regional Australian Population**

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**Abstract :** Background Breast cancer (BC) is usually managed with surgical resection. Many outcomes traditionally used to define successful operative management, such as resection margin, do not adequately reflect patients' experience. Patient-reported outcomes (PRO) such as Health-Related Quality of life (HRQoL) provide a means by which the impact of surgery for cancer can be reported in a patient-centered way. This exploratory cross-sectional study aims to; (1) describe postoperative HRQoL in patients who underwent primary resection in a regional Australian hospital; (2) describe the prevalence of anxiety, depression and clinically significant fear of cancer recurrence (FCR) in this population; and (3) identify demographic, psychosocial, disease and treatment factors associated with poorer self-reported HRQoL. Methods Patients who had resection of BC in a regional Australian hospital between 2015 and 2022 were eligible. Participants were asked to complete a survey designed to assess HRQoL, as well as validated instruments that assess several other psychosocial PROs hypothesized to be associated with HRQoL; emotional distress, fear of cancer recurrence, social support, dispositional optimism, body image and spirituality. Results Forty-six patients completed the survey. Clinically significant levels of FCR and emotional distress were present in this group. Many domains of HRQoL were significantly worse than an Australian reference population for BC. Demographic and disease factors associated with poor HRQoL included smoking and ongoing adjuvant systemic therapy. The primary operation was not associated with HRQoL for breast cancer. All psychosocial factors measured were associated with HRQoL. Conclusion HRQoL is an important outcome in surgery for both research and clinical practice. This study provides an overview of the quality of life in a regional Australian population of postoperative breast cancer patients and the factors that affect it. Understanding HRQoL and awareness of patients particularly vulnerable to poor outcomes should be used to aid the informed consent and shared decision-making process between surgeon and patient.

**Keywords :** breast cancer, surgery, quality of life, regional population

**Conference Title :** ICGSO 2023 : International Conference on General Surgery and Ophthalmology

**Conference Location :** Madrid, Spain

**Conference Dates :** March 20-21, 2023