Dietary Patterns and Adherence to the Mediterranean Diet among Breast Cancer Female Patients in Lebanon: A Cross-Sectional Study

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Abstract : Breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer site among women worldwide and the second most common cause of cancer mortality. Breast cancer rates differ vastly between geographical areas, countries, and within the same country. In Lebanon, the proportion of breast cancer to all other sites of tumor is 38.2%; these rates are still lower than those observed worldwide, but remain the highest among Arab countries. Studies and evidence based reviews show a strong association between breast cancer development and prognosis and dietary habits, specifically the Mediterranean diet (MD). As such, the aim of this study is to examine dietary patterns and adherence to the MD among a sample of 182 breast cancer female patients in Beirut, Lebanon. Subjects were recruited from two major hospitals; a private medical center and a public hospital. All subjects were administered two questionnaires: socio- demographics and Mediterranean diet adherence. Five Mediterranean scores were calculated: MS, MSDPS, PMDI, PREDIMED and DDS. The mean age of the participants was 53.78 years. The overall adherence to the Mediterranean diet (MD) was low since the sample means of 3 out of the 5 calculated scores were less than the scores' medians. Given that 4 out of the 5 Mediterranean scores significantly varied between the recruitment sites, women in the private medical center were found to adhere more to the MD. Our results also show that the majority of the sample population's intakes are exceeding the recommendations for total and saturated fat, while meeting the requirements for fiber, EPA, DHA and Linolenic Acid. Participants in the private medical center were consuming significantly more calories, carbohydrates, fiber, sugar, Lycopene, Calcium, Iron and Folate and less fat. After conducting multivariate linear regression analyses, the following significant results were observed: positive associations between MD (CPMDI, PREDIMED) and monthly income & current state of health, while negative associations between MD (MSDPS, PREDIMED) and age & employment status. Our findings indicated a low overall adherence to the MD and identified factors associated with it; which suggests a need to address dietary habits among BC patients in Lebanon, specifically encouraging them to adhere to their traditional Mediterranean diet.

Keywords : Adherence, Breast cancer, Dietary patterns, Mediterranean diet, Nutrition
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