

## Controlling Fear: Jordanian Women's Perceptions of the Diagnosis and Surgical Treatment of Early Stage Breast Cancer

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**Abstract :** Background: Despite the fact that breast cancer is the most prevalent cancer among Jordanian women, practically nothing is known about their perceptions of early stage breast cancer and surgical treatment. Objective: To gain understanding of the diagnosis and surgical treatment experience of Jordanian women diagnosed with early stage breast cancer. Methods: An interpretive phenomenological approach was used for this study. A purposive sample of 28 Jordanian women who were surgically treated for early stage breast cancer within 6 months of the interview was recruited. Data were collected using individual interviews and analyzed using Heideggerian hermeneutical methodology. Results: Fear had a profound effect on Jordanian women's stories of diagnosis and surgical treatment of early stage breast cancer. Women's experience with breast cancer and its treatment was shaped by their pre-existing fear of breast cancer, the disparity in the quality of care at various health care institutions, and sociodemographic factors (e.g., education, age). Conclusions: Early after the diagnosis, fear was very strong and women lost perspective of the fact that this disease was treatable and potentially curable. To control their fears, women unconditionally trusted God, the health care system, surgeons, family, friends, and/or neighbors, and often accepted treatment offered by their surgeons without questioning. Implications for practice: Jordanian healthcare providers have a responsibility to listen to their patients, explore meanings they ascribe to their illness, and provide women with proper education and support necessary to help them cope with their illness.

**Keywords :** breast cancer, early stage, Jordanian, experience, phenomenology

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