

# Breast cancer treatment requires a holistic approach

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**Abstract :** *It is of utmost importance for people diagnosed with breast cancer any type of cancer, to receive medical treatment, as well as psychological counselling to deal with and cope with the diagnosis. A holistic approach should be an essential part of institutional services for cancer patients. Coping strategies include methods of dealing with goals and problems such as medical, physical, emotional, social, and spiritual. The education should specifically focus on finding and considering the obstacles to cancer screening and enforcing screening for cancer. Psychological interventions, such as autogenic training, are frequently used by psychologists to reduce stress and anxiety and improve health. Autogenic training can also be used as a preventive method to identify and consider barriers to cancer screening and to promote cancer screening. This method needs to take into account the specific socioeconomics, personality and relationships of the persons, the available healthcare, the holistic approach and the attitudes of healthcare providers. Medical and mental health support are equally important; the diagnosis requires changing the way of thinking about life and thinking and dealing with death issues. Coping strategies include methods of dealing with goals and problems such as medical, physical, emotional, social, and spiritual. Psychological interventions, such as autogenic training, are frequently used by psychologists to reduce stress and anxiety. Cancer patients' well-being is determined by the level of fulfilment of their physical, social, psychological, emotional, and spiritual needs. Consequently, the whole person needs to be considered, and each patient's information and support needs, treatment options, side effects and other health concerns; need to be assessed and culturally appropriate resources and referrals need to be discussed if necessary. Providing. Mind-body techniques are an important part of comprehensive care because they help patients manage stress, improve emotional well-being, and promote physical recovery. Through mind-body interventions, patients achieve relaxation, calmness, and peace, essential for overall well-being. Mindfulness promotes being present in the moment, accepting reality, increasing awareness of one's thoughts and emotions, developing a greater sense of calmness and focus, reducing stress, improving sleep, and promoting emotional well-being.*

**Key Words:** *Breast Cancer, Cancer Screening, Psychology, Autogenic Training, Holistic Approach Counselling, Stress Reduction, Mental Health.*

## 1. PURPOSE OF OVERVIEW :

The most common cancer among Western women is breast cancer. The diagnosis should consider the coping behaviour of the patient, the family, and friends. The diagnosis is often connected to pain, anxiety, depression, and other emotional and cognitive disorders. The authors of this review have participated in many studies on breast cancer, and this review aims to determine the impact of breast cancer on the mental health of the person affected by breast cancer. How women diagnosed with breast cancer, their families and friends think, feel, experience the psychological process, cope and deal with health consequences, including their mental health

Receiving a cancer diagnosis has both personal and social consequences. People might be afraid of dying because the disease is seen as a malicious, destructive enemy. Some people try to cope with fear, especially psychologically when they are diagnosed with cancer. Most importantly, patients are provided with counselling and education to help them cope with negative thoughts and feelings related to cancer. Research on psychological interventions and ways to manage stress and anxiety in cancer patients shows that psychotherapy can be very helpful. This could be cognitive behaviour, cognitive-based reduction, mindfulness training, or autogenic training. There are personal and social implications when one is diagnosed with cancer. Some persons succumb and fear dying of cancer because the illness is seen as a vicious, unpredictable and destructive enemy. Others try to cope when they get diagnosed with cancer, especially psychologically coping with experienced fears. It is of utmost importance that the patients are counselled and trained in dealing with negative feelings and thoughts associated with cancer. Studies about psychological interventions and approaches for managing anxiety and distress in cancer survivors have shown that psychotherapy is very useful. This can be cognitive behavioural therapy based on stress reduction, self-management

methods, or autogenic training. A cancer diagnosis can have negative effects on a person's mental health. This diagnosis can be devastating and cause emotional changes that can affect a woman's body and mind. Patients may change if they have to modify their lives to cope with the stressful emotions and situations that arise with a cancer diagnosis. Stress and psychological problems may arise when patients cannot control the stressful situations caused by the diagnosis, and subsequently social dilemmas. Emotions can range from negative emotions and sadness to emotions that affect quality of life, such as anxiety, depression, and anxiety. Symptoms of anxiety disorder include extreme worry, fear, and feelings of terror. The anxiety disorder can develop into generalized anxiety, a panic disorder or a social anxiety disorder

## **2. OBSTACLES TO CANCER SCREENING :**

Understanding the factors which influence whether individuals choose to get screened for cancer when they should get screened is critical to ensure that people get the preventive care they need. John P. Williams: President of Cancer Advocate in America reported: " Failure to follow instructions is because of, lack of recommendations, lack of confidence in medical procedures, fear or anxiety, travel problems, handling of medical issues, difficulty navigating the healthcare system logistical issues e.g., lack of transportation and lack of care. (Williams J. 2022) Some obstacles to the use of contraceptives might also be relevant, pertinent, psychological mechanisms for dealing with cancer. If we substitute contraception with cancer a functional analysis would consider: What situations in their environment, their environment, are there What is their knowledge of health facilities and assistance. What emotions do they associate with cancer? What judgments and possible prejudices do they have about cancer? What consequences does the cancer diagnosis have, and what consequences do they expect from significant others in their lives? (Leckie 2023) In the relationship and communication with the partner, there might be a taboo on this subject and talking about it means that the partners have to ignore the prevailing taboo in society. An important condition for cancer prevention and treatment is also the woman's ability to make use of the available health care in terms of available funds and health insurance coverage, the distance to the place of assistance and the means of transport. Health providers can influence cancer prevention and treatment through their actions. Negative attitudes, personal guilt, and scepticism regarding cancer or religious beliefs can be transferred from healthcare professionals to patients. Fear can be devastating and inhibit health-seeking behaviour. In some cases, it was verbalized that the cancer diagnosis is viewed as punishment for immoral behaviour. Because of concern about side effects, people worry that the treatment will go wrong, causing serious side effects or organ failure. The World Health Organization says cancer is the leading cause of death worldwide and killed nearly 10 million people in 2020. Many cancers can be cured with early diagnosis and appropriate treatment. properly. The World Health Organization (WHO) says 30% to 50% of cancer cases can be prevented by avoiding risks and following current prevention guidelines. (WHO 2022) There is a need to improve breast cancer control and reduce avoidable deaths from breast cancer, focusing on health promotion, timely diagnosis and access to care to accelerate coordinated implementation Also a need to increase access to essential cancer medicines and provide technical assistance for rapid, effective transfer of best practice interventions to hospitals and treatment centers. Strongly promote a holistic approach which enhances the health of the patients, improves preventative care, encourages respect for dignity and humanity, reduces treatment costs of those receiving care and benefits patients, health care providers and health care systems as well. The approach refers to the treatment of the whole person, taking into account mental and social factors, rather than just the symptoms of a disease. It addresses the patient's physical, emotional, social and spiritual needs.

## **3. COPING WITH CANCER DIAGNOSIS STRESS :**

A common first stress reaction to a cancer diagnosis is shock and denial. The increased incidence of non-specific distress after diagnosis may be a phase in which patients experience shock, pain, uncertainty, existential anxiety, and threat. A cancer diagnosis can change a patient's outlook on their future, business failure, managing the emotions of loved ones, and death. (Fortin et al., 2021) Research shows that coping strategies in cancer patients are important for disease prevention (Lake et al., 2019). Relationships and support are important when dealing with breast cancer. Social isolation can be detrimental to a patient's mental health. Depression can cause feelings of sadness, lack of interest in activities, changes in appetite, difficult thoughts, and sometimes suicidal thoughts. Kübler-Ross proposed five stages of dealing with death: denial, isolation, anger, negotiation, depression, and acceptance. This provides insight into how impending death affects patients. She described the stress patients may experience. level of grief; denial, anger; Trust, depression, and how cancer can negatively impact relationships. Fredrickson and Joyner's broadening and building theory states that all positive or negative emotions are adaptive in certain situations. People also need negative emotions to survive difficult situations and respond appropriately in the short term, but they have no real connection to what is happening in the here and now. (Fredrickson, B.L. and Carpentry, T., 2018). It's important to find a balance between them. A brief experience with negative emotions can lead to heartbreak. Positive thinking expands our knowledge and

unlocks new ideas so we can thrive and promote survival. Finding a balance between the two is key. There are several psychological interventions for cancer patients to improve their coping, including their mental health and quality of life and meet the psychosocial needs of cancer patients. For instance, psychosocial interventions like cognitive behavioral therapy focus on life reviews and enhancing; dignity, meaning-centered psychotherapy to improve meaning and quality of life and relaxation therapies like autogenic training and communication skills. Autogenic training is a kind of meditation often used for reducing stress. Especially techniques coming from positive Psychology can be beneficial for cancer patients. The focus and use of gratitude, meaning focusing on the positive experiences in your life, thankful for the good things in your life; thinking about what you are grateful for, you might write it in a journal. The importance is to counteract negativity and anxiety by endorsing antagonistic perceptions and emotions and allow yourself through gratitude moments of enjoyment of your positive experiences. A study by Leckie and Boedhoe D (2023) with 30 respondents, all women with breast cancer, showed that autogenic training does help breast cancer-diagnosed women approach the illness less stressed and fearful. This is not an alternative medical procedure, but an additional psychological intervention needed in a holistic approach of a person with cancer. Providing psychological methods through training and counselling is of utmost importance to enable cancer patients to deal with feelings of stress and anxiety including negative feelings, social and spiritual issues, and perceptions of death, these findings endorse the stress-coping paradigm which mentions three relevant aspects in adaptation to illness and its treatment and consequences: Number one; primary appraisal of the situation. Number two, appraisal of one's ability to cope with the illness, its treatment and consequences, and number three, the actual coping behavior. The most common psychological interventions include psycho-education, psychotherapy, cognitive-behavioral therapy and professionally led social support groups. (Ranchor A. et. all)

To cope with the disturbance a cancer diagnosis causes, Kneier et al 2023 mention:

1. *Face the Reality of your Illness*
2. *Stay Hopeful and Optimistic*
3. *Balance your emotional response to a certain degree it is helpful to be upset and worried.*
4. *Express your emotions*
5. *Seek Support*
6. *Participate actively in your treatment*
7. *The diagnosis and treatment of cancer is an awful experience, but also a challenge, an opportunity for positive change.*
8. *Call upon your spiritual beliefs, faith, and prayer in dealing with cancer.*
9. *Uphold your Self-Esteem*
10. *Come to terms with your mortality and resist the prospect of an presumable death.*

#### 4. COPING WITH CANCER FEAR, SURINAME STUDIES :

Many psychological interventions can improve cancer patients' coping problems, including their mental health and quality of life. For example, psychological interventions such as cognitive behavioural therapy focus on life analysis and development. They should use gratitude by focusing on the positive experiences in their life and being grateful for the good things which happened in their life which they can write in their journal. Fight negative emotions and stress, recognize negative feelings and thoughts and give yourself time to focus on positive psychology to improve the meaning and quality of life; and rehabilitation. Convey this and use therapies such as autogenic training and communication. Autogenic training is a form of meditation often used to reduce stress. Ideas from positive psychology may be especially helpful for cancer patients. A study was done by Leckie and Boedhoe D (2023) on breast cancer patients) showed that autogenic training can help women diagnosed with breast cancer cope with the stress of sadness and fear of the disease. This is not an alternative treatment, but a psychological intervention in addition to the usual medical treatment for cancer patients. It is important to provide psychological support through education and counselling to help cancer patients cope with stress and anxiety, negative thoughts, problems in relationships and emotions, and thoughts of death. Psychological interventions include psychoeducation, psychotherapy, cognitive behavioural therapy, and professional group regulations. (Ranchor A. et al.) Women could get free cervical cancer screening but did not participate due to fear. This avoidance behaviour was found at all levels of education. (Leckie 2013) Some women who used the free cervical screening had fears about the examination. Women who had the VIA test, a visual inspection, that provides immediate diagnostic results, were more fearful than women who had a Pap smear, which results came available approximately 4 to 6 weeks after the test. To assess coping mechanisms, the TMT was used. A terror management theory claims that when an external attack occurs, self-belief leads to fear/fearlessness; death anxiety drives people to adopt worldviews that protect their self-esteem, worthiness, and sustainability and allow

them to believe that they play an important role in a meaningful world; resulting in the emergence of a stronger protective presence than increasing threats. The TMT became popular in fear studies after the nine eleven Twin Towers attacks. The theory explains, what leads to changes in the world, Women who received the VIA screening reported changes in their health and perspective on the world. To prevent/eliminate fear, these women reported positive feelings towards the Surinamese and more negative feelings towards Americans, following the Terror Management theory. Their beliefs also appeared to reduce fear and influence the use of problem-solving techniques besides their worldviews. Effects of self-regulation on stress and global conservation. (Leckie 2013) Coping with stress and anxiety is also positive by following the “problem-solving” methods. Accepting beliefs such as "reassuring thoughts", "avoidance/waiting", "anxiety/silence", "seeking support from others, expressing emotions" and finally "fighting evil as if waiting for trouble". Carcinoma and their coping mechanisms a study done in Suriname indicates that the coping style 'active solving' is most often used meaning an active approach in dealing with stress and anxiety issues, followed by the styles 'reassuring thoughts', 'avoiding/waiting', 'Numbness/palliative response' which is more like accepting the faith, 'seeking social support from others, expression of emotions and finally 'passive reaction pattern, which is like awaiting the ordeal. ((Boedhoe D., Leckie G. 2018) Breast cancer patients are not the only ones who need defence mechanisms from a breast cancer diagnosis. There is also evidence that breast cancer screening has a significant impact on the patients also on the mental health of partners. The resulting depression and anxiety may negatively influence patients and partners and this considerably lowers their psychological well-being. (Joemai S. Leckie G. 2018))

## **5. PRIORITISE MENTAL HEALTH :**

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects the way we think and feel, how we cope with stress, the choices we make and how we treat others. There are indications that the diagnosis of cancer is negatively related to the mental health of the patient. Although the diagnosis of breast cancer refers to a physical disease, it affects a person's mental health We must be careful as we approach life and choose our thoughts, feelings and actions based on our relationships with others. It helps you avoid stress in life, build relationships, be productive, and reach your potential. You might get the impression that life is flying by, common are anxiety, sadness, or depression. But it's important to improve your mental health as part of successful cancer and holistic treatment. No matter how important your breast cancer treatment plan is, also prioritize your mental health. Avoid negative processes that affect your mind, such as alcohol, food and drugs. Taking care of your health means not only attending therapy and attending groups, but also taking care of yourself, getting enough sleep, eating well, and being good socially. Having and maintaining good habits is important and can benefit your physical health as well as your emotional and mental health. Negative thoughts activate the amygdala, a brain region associated with fear and anxiety. Positive emotions last longer and longer activation is associated with greater happiness. This mental activation is associated with physical change, including reduced. Gratitude makes you appreciate positive experiences, past and present and helps you look at life differently. Taking the time to express gratitude can help you cope with stress and improve your mood. This is important for health professionals. Cancer diagnosis requires a patient-centered approach. (Boedhoe D, Leckie G. 2018)). Mental illness and poor environmental support are risk factors for poor quality of life (Montazeri, 2008).

## **6. CONCLUSION :**

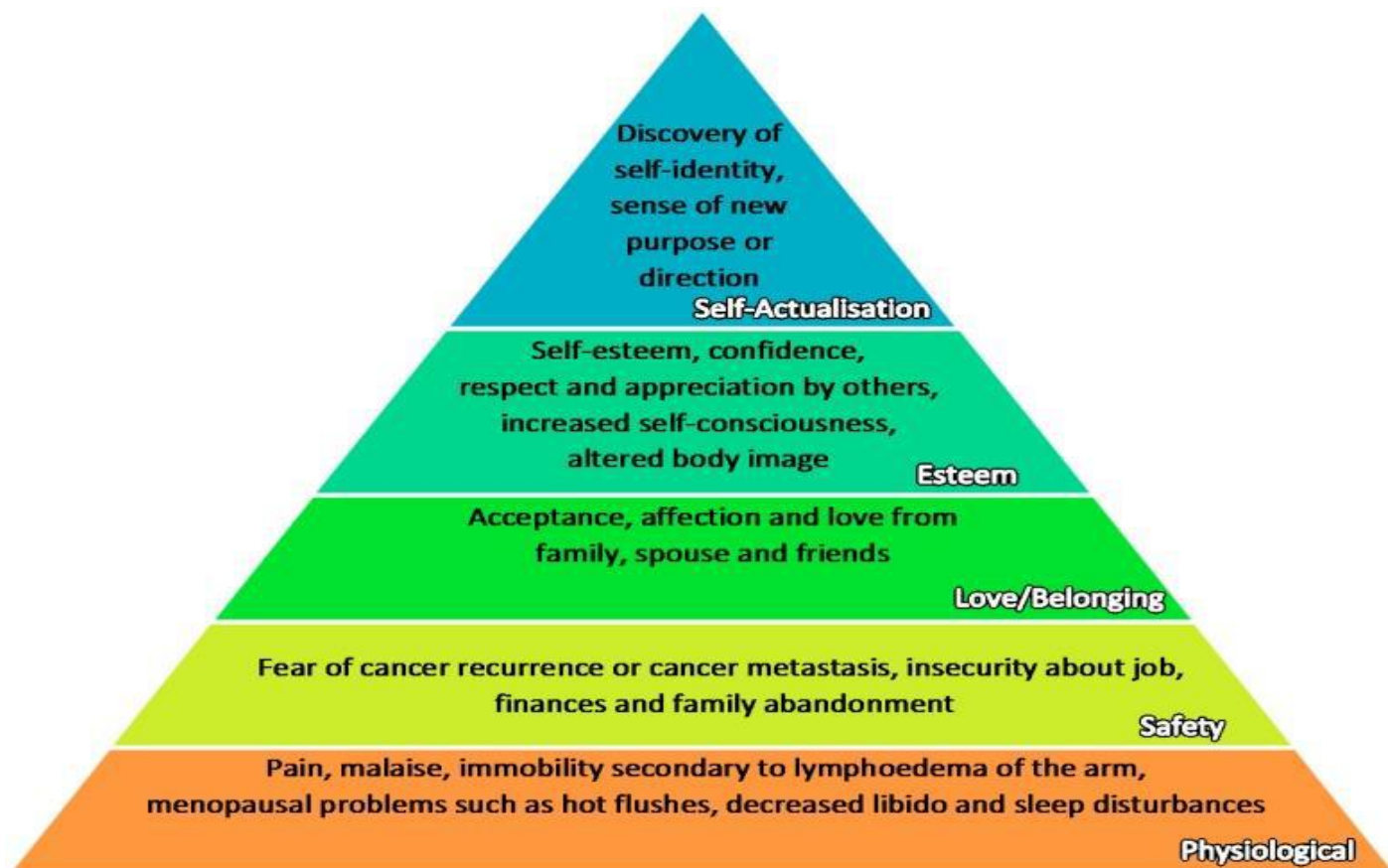
It is of utmost importance for people diagnosed with breast cancer any type of cancer, to receive medical treatment, as well as psychological counselling to cope with the diagnosis. A holistic approach consisting of Medical and mental health support is important because the diagnosis requires changing the way of thinking about life, thinking and dealing with death issues. Much needs to be done to provide these services and they should be a crucial part of institutional services for cancer patients. Coping strategies need to be available for those patients who need them which include methods of dealing with goals and problems, such as medical, physical, emotional, social, and spiritual. The education should specifically focus on finding and considering the obstacles to cancer screening and enforcing screening for cancer. Psychological interventions, such as autogenic training, are often used by psychologists to reduce stress and anxiety and improve health. Autogenic training can also be used as a preventative method to identify and address barriers to cancer screening and promote cancer screening. All interventions should take into account the specific socioeconomic situation, people's personalities and attitudes, available health services, attitudes of health care providers and use of holistic approaches.

## **7. RECOMMENDATIONS :**

It is of utmost importance for people diagnosed with breast cancer any type of cancer, to receive medical treatment, as well as psychological counselling to deal with and cope with the diagnosis. Medical and mental health support are both important; the diagnosis requires changing the way of thinking about life and thinking and dealing with

death issues. Much needs to be done to provide these services and they should be made part of institutional services for cancer patients. Coping strategies include methods of dealing with goals and problems such as medical, physical, emotional, social, and spiritual. They need to be available for those patients who need them because cancer patients' well-being is determined by the level of fulfilment of their physical, social, psychological, emotional, and spiritual needs. The education should specifically focus on finding and considering the obstacles to cancer screening and promoting screening for cancer. Psychological interventions, such as autogenic training, are frequently used by psychologists to reduce stress and anxiety and improve health. Autogenic training can also be used as a preventive method to identify and consider barriers to cancer screening and to promote cancer screening. The prerequisites to take into account are the specific socioeconomics, personality and relationships of the persons, the available healthcare, the practice of the holistic approach and the attitudes of healthcare providers. Consequently, holistically, the whole person needs to be considered, each patient's information and support needs, treatment options, side effects and other health concerns; need to be assessed and culturally appropriate resources and referrals available or made available. Mind-body techniques are an important part of a holistic treatment because they help patients manage stress, improve emotional well-being, and promote physical recovery. Through interventions on the mind and body, patients achieve the relaxation, calmness and serenity necessary for their overall well-being. Mindfulness involves being in the present moment, accepting reality, becoming more aware of one's thoughts and feelings, developing a greater sense of calm and focus, reducing stress, improving sleep, and promoting emotional well-being. Based on the differential diagnosis, the counsellor can review Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in the context of breast cancer to assess the individual patient's specific needs and desired outcomes.

*"Each patient at different stages of breast cancer; faces different challenges and is surrounded by unique circumstances, so there is a need to individualize a comprehensive recovery package for each patient based on periodic comprehensive needs assessments. Recognize and use a set of assessment tools that help patients and healthcare providers reflect on their needs and explore how to achieve the best outcomes. We want patients to be able to take better control of their lives after breast cancer diagnosis and treatment." (Benson, J et. All, 2012)*



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in the context of breast cancer. (Ng ZX 2017)

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