

ABSTRACT

The Psychosocial effects of Breast Cancer on Women in Jamaica

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The psychosocial effects of breast cancer are many and should be managed in a way to encompass the psychological and social well-being of all these women and their families. The rationale of the study was to identify methods of assisting women with the disease to improve their coping skills.

This cross-sectional study was conducted in Kingston and St. Andrew where one hundred and seven patients were interviewed at clinics. The principal objective and scope of the investigation was to assess the emotional reaction to the diagnosis, to compare the advice given by doctor and that of family. To assess the effects of treatment, if any, on behavioural changes, relationships with partners and families, self esteem and employment.

The results demonstrated that acceptance of diagnosis was the dominant emotional reaction. The family agreed to follow treatment recommended by doctor. Almost all women expected a cure as partner and family supported them in their fight to achieve it. Several had adopted a healthier lifestyle. The illness did not affect self-esteem and ability to work.

In conclusion, one may say that the study showed an acceptance of the diagnosis by these women with breast cancer. They were driven to positive action and acceptance of treatment which would effect a cure. For them, life had meaning and purpose and they were willing to see some of their goals accomplished.