

Depression, Personality and Life Stress Among Women with Breast Cancer in Eastern Croatian Region

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Breast cancer is the most common among women and represents the overall leading cancer in mortality rates. There is more than million newly diagnosed breast cancer in the world every year. Incidence of breast cancer in Croatia is 100/100 000 or 2300 women per year. Every year, in Croatia, 900 women die due to this carcinoma. Breast carcinoma is mostly found in women ages 45-60.

As the depression rates grow higher every year it is important to address the fact that among women with breast cancer the depressive symptoms or depressive disorder is three times higher. These symptoms are often correlated with stress (various life events), personality traits, sociodemographics and course of the primary disease (breast cancer).

We have conducted a research among eighty (N=80) premenopausal women (40-60 years) with diagnosed breast cancer shortly (3-7 days) after surgical treatment. Exclusion criteria was any kind of earlier mental illness or psychiatric treatment/therapy . This research was conducted on Clinic for Surgery, Department of Thoracic surgery in the Clinical Hospital Centre Osijek (Croatia) and following questionnaires were applied: Hamilton depression rating scale; Temperament and Character Inventory and Life Change Index Scale – The Stress Test.

The obtained results were showed new perspective in dealing with this disease, especially in this eastern Croatian region, and need for interdisciplinary approach since significantly high ratio of women showed depressive symptoms due to negative results correlated with stress and poor social/family support and also with specific personality features.