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QUALITY OF LIFE OF TUNISIAN WOMEN AFTER THE TREATMENT OF BREAST CANCER

L. Mnif¹, J. Masmoudi¹, N. Charfi¹, R. Damak¹, M. Guerhazi², A. Jaoua¹

¹Psychiatry A, ²Gynecology, Hedi Chaker University Hospital, Sfax, Tunisia

Introduction: In Tunisia, the breast cancer is the most frequently diagnosed neoplasm in women.

Objectives were to:

- Highlight the health-related QOL of Tunisian women after the treatment of breast cancer compared with the general population.
- assess the functional scales that predict the global quality of life (GQOL) scale of the QLQ - C30.

Methods: We recruited 50 patients who were in remission for at least 3 months after initial treatment of breast cancer, and 50 women with no history of cancer.

Those patients were previously referred to the Department of Gynecology in Sfax University Hospital for breast surgery, and then they had all received adjuvant therapy.

QOL was evaluated using the Arabic version of the European Organization for Research and Treatment of Cancer (EORTC) QLQ-C30 questionnaire.

Results: The mean scores for QLQ - C30 indicated that the patients had poor to average functioning (GQOL, 56.7; and five functional scales, 55.6%-67.3%).

Those scores showed a significant deterioration in the sample of breast cancer survivors relative to general population.

Among the symptoms scales, only the financial difficulties were significantly greater in patients ($p=9.10^{-7}$).

Deterioration of the GQOL was induced by the worsening of the emotional ($p= 0.005$) and social ($p= 0.008$) functioning but it was independent of symptoms scales.

Conclusion: The findings indicated that, despite many treatment advances, Tunisian women had significantly poorer GQOL and functional scales scores in comparison with the general population. It seems also that improving the emotional and social functioning contribute to a better GQOL.