
SEXUAL FUNCTION IN WOMEN AFTER MASTECTOMY: A SURVEY OF POLISH PATIENTS

R. Kowalczyk¹, Z. Lew-Starowicz², K. Krzemieniecki³, I. Cedrych⁴, I. Streb³

¹Department of Sexology in Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski Cracow University, Cracow, Poland ; ²Department of Sexual Rehabilitation Academy of Physical Education, Warsaw, Poland ; ³Department of Clinical Oncology Cracow University Hospital, Cracow, Poland ; ⁴Maria Skłodowska-Curie Memorial Cancer Center and Institute of Oncology, Cracow, Poland

Objective: As various studies show, women after mastectomy are accompanied by many problems in the sexual sphere; it considerably lowers their quality of life. Goal of the study is to describe the relationship between the illness as well as the treatment of choice and the sexuality of Polish patients. Another goal is a comparison of the study results with results obtained in similar studies in Europe.

Design and method: The target group of 300 women after mastectomy is in the process of assessment. The subjects are recruited among Polish patients diagnosed and treated at the Department of Clinical Oncology, Cracow University Hospital in Cracow, Maria Skłodowska-Curie Memorial Cancer Center and Institute of Oncology in Warsaw and its branches in Katowice and Cracow.

The following questionnaires are used: Changes in Sexual Functioning Questionnaire (CSFQ – F – C), Body Image Questionnaire (KOC-BR), Sexual Interaction Inventory (SII), Quality of Life Questionnaire QLQ – BR23. Questionnaires were supplemented by questions related to social-economic status and oncology treatment.

Conclusions. The type of treatment has a major impact on patients' health, including sexual health. During chemotherapy, hormonal therapy, changes in mood and appearance of patients are present, which has an impact on both self-image of women after mastectomy, as well as the relationship with their partners. Mastectomy patients feel less attractive, less likely to engage in sexual activities. They have ambivalent feelings about their body image and sexual attractiveness.