Quality of Life of Women after Breast Surgery: Report from Mirebalais University Hospital in Haiti

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Introduction

- Breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer worldwide and the leading cause of cancer death among women in low-resource settings, including Haiti.
- Limited access to radiation therapy at Mirebalais University Hospital (HUM) means most patients receive modified radical mastectomy (MRM) and systemic therapy.
- MRM can significantly affect physical, emotional, and social well-being.

- **Objective**: To assess QOL, anxiety, and depression among women post-MRM at HUM using validated tools (FACT-B and HADS).

Methods

Design: Cross-sectional, descriptive study conducted at HUM (January 2018-December 2023).

Participants: 85 women with pathologically confirmed breast cancer who underwent MRM with curative intent.

Data Collection:
- Clinical and demographic data abstracted from EMRs and paper charts.
- Telephone-administered survey assessing QOL, anxiety, and depression.

Instruments:
- Functional Assessment of Cancer Therapy-Breast (FACT-B: measures physical (PWB), social (SWB), emotional (EWB), functional well-being (FWB), and breast-specific concerns (BCS); total score range 0-144.
- Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS): assesses anxiety (HADS-A) and depression (HADS-D).

Analysis:
- Descriptive statistics and non-parametric tests (Mann-Whitney, Kruskal-Wallis).
- Logistic regression to explore predictors of anxiety (HADS-A ≥8) and severe depression (HADS-D ≥15).

Results

Cohort Characteristics (Table 1):
- Cohort (n = 87)
- Median age: 50 years (IQR 43-58)
- Most patients (69%) resided in the West department
- 83% postmenopausal; 41% married
- Educational attainment was modest, with 32% patients having only primary school level education
- Most patients (66%) had locally advanced tumors
- 68% had ECOG performance status = 1
- 99% received chemotherapy; 92% received hormonal therapy

Psychological Assessment (HADS; Figures 1 and 2):
- Median Anxiety = 8 (IQR 6-11), reflecting mild anxiety
- Median Depression = 13 (IQR 12-15), reflecting moderate-severe depression
- Age > 50 yrs showed significantly lower anxiety risk
- Depression remained prevalent regardless of age, clinical, or treatment characteristics

Quality of Life (FACT-B; Table 2, Figures 3 and 4):
- Median total FACT-B: 111.5 (IQR 97.2-122.7), reflecting overall good QOL
- Younger women (<50 yrs) had lower emotional well-being (p = 0.0016)
- Dual chemotherapy (neoadjuvant + adjuvant) associated with significantly lower total and domain-specific QOL (physical, emotional, breast-specific)
- No other associations between most demographic/clinical variables and QOL

Key Takeaways

- Haitian women reported good quality of life following MRM
- Younger women experienced greater emotional distress and anxiety.
- The high prevalence of at least moderate depression in over 50% of patients indicates unmet psychosocial needs in this population.
- The study highlights the need for improved mental health services for patients with breast cancer, especially for younger patients.

Table 1. Baseline Patient Characteristics (n = 87)

Baseline Characteristics		n (%)
Age, median (IQR)	50 (43-58)	
Menopausal Status	Post-menopausal	71 (83.53)
Education	Any Primary	27 (31.8)
	Any Secondary	41 (48.2)
	Other	17 (20)
Marital Status	Single	29 (34.1)
	Married	35 (41.2)
	Widowed/Other	23 (24.7)
Department of Residence	West	59 (69.4)
	Artibonite	8 (9.4)
	Centre	6 (7.1)
	Other	12 (14.1)
Clinical Stage	Early	15 (17.6)
	Locally Advanced	56 (65.9)
	Indeterminate	14 (16.47)
ECOG Performance	1	58 (68.2)
	2	23 (27.1)
Treatment Received*	Surgery (MRM)	85 (100)
	Chemotherapy	84 (98.8)
	Hormonal Therapy	78 (91.8)

*Treatment modalities are non-mutually exclusive; most patients received more than one therapy

Figure 1: Distribution of Depression Scores (HADS-D)

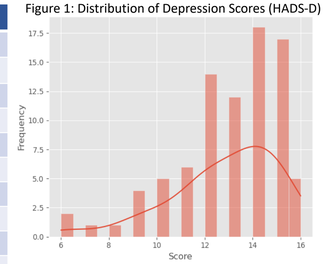


Figure 2: Distribution of Anxiety Scores (HADS-A)

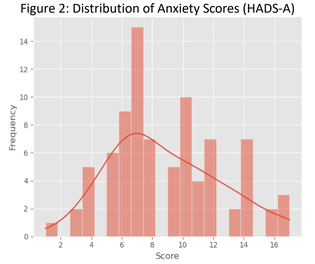


Figure 3: Distribution of Breast QOL Scores (FACT-B)

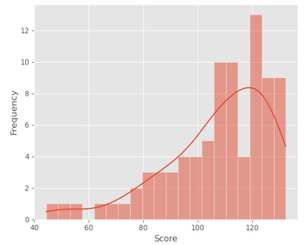


Figure 4: Distribution of General QOL Scores (FACT-G)

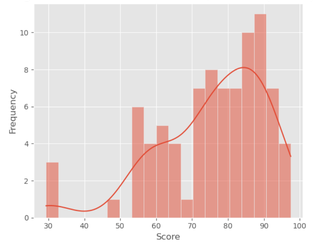


Table 2. Breast Cancer QOL – FACT Scores

Characteristics		N (%)	FACT-B. median (IQR)	PWB median (IQR)	SWB median (IQR)	EWB median (IQR)	FWB median (IQR)	BCS median (IQR)
All		85(100)	111.5 (97.2 – 122.7)	22 (19 – 25)	18 (13 – 21)	23.33 (18.7 – 25.7)	18 (14 – 19)	33 (30 – 35)
Age	Less than 50	39 (45.9)	107.7 (91.8, 120.4)	21.0 (17.0, 23.5)	18.0 (13.5, 20.5)	21.0 (16.3, 23.3)	17.0 (13.0, 19.0)	33.0 (27.0, 35.0)
	50 to 60	30 (35.3)	117.8 (100.5, 123.8)	23.0 (20.3, 25.0)	17.0 (13.3, 21.0)	25.7 (21.3, 26.5)	18.0 (15.0, 20.0)	34.0 (31.3, 36.0)
	More than 60	16 (18.8)	113.4 (103.3, 120.9)	24.0 (21.0, 25.5)	17.8 (14.0, 19.5)	25.1 (23.0, 25.7)	18.0 (15.5, 19.0)	33.0 (31.0, 35.0)
	p=		0.21	0.08	0.99	**0.0016**	0.90	0.45
Chemotherapy received	Adjuvant alone	48 (56.5)	116.8 (106.3, 123.7)	24.0 (21.0, 25.0)	17.8 (14.0, 21.0)	24.5 (21.9, 25.7)	18.0 (15.0, 20.0)	34.0 (31.0, 36.0)
	Both	9 (10.6)	103.5 (92.3, 114.0)	21.0 (21.0, 21.0)	18.0 (17.0, 18.0)	21.0 (16.3, 23.3)	15.0 (14.0, 19.0)	32.0 (30.0, 34.0)
	Neoadjuvant alone	27 (31.8)	107.3 (92.3, 119.6)	22.0 (17.0, 24.0)	17.0 (11.5, 21.0)	22.2 (16.3, 25.1)	17.0 (13.0, 19.0)	32.0 (26.0, 33.5)
	P=		0.03	**0.02**	0.80	**0.007**	0.41	**0.04**

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