INCIDENCE OF RELATIONSHIP BREAKUPS DURING ENDOCRINE THERAPY FOR BREAST CANCER: PRELIMINARY RESULTS OF THE REBRECA TRIAL

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BACKGROUND

- Breast cancer and its treatment significantly impact patients' interpersonal relationships, with lasting effects.
- Adverse events of anticancer therapies, including sexual dysfunction and body image changes, frequently negatively affect patients' quality of life and relationships.

OBJECTIVES: to evaluate the incidence of relationship breakups (RBr) during endocrine therapy (ET) for breast cancer and its associated factors

METHODS

This is a single-center, retrospective, observational cohort study.

Participants: female ≥18 years-old, with HR+ breast cancer (metastatic or non-metastatic) undergoing ET for ≥ 6 months.

Data were collected through an online questionnaire

✓ **Primary Endpoint**: incidence of RBr among those in a relationship at ET initiation.

✓ **Secondary Endpoints**: factors associated with RBr and motivations for maintaining relationships.

Descriptive statistics, Chi-square or Fisher's exact tests

RESULTS

Table 1. Sociodemographic and Clinical Characteristics of Patients

Variable	Total (%) N = 162
Age (years) – median (IQR)	44
College Degree	
Yes	140 (86.4)
No	22 (13.6)
Race	
White	109 (67.3)
Black/Brown	42 (25.9)
Yellow	9 (5.6)
Other	2 (1.2)
Sexual Orientation	
Heterosexual	154 (95.1)
Homosexual	5 (3.1)
Bisexual	3 (1.9)
Menopausal Status	
Pre-menopausal	123 (75.9)
Pos- menopausal	39 (24.1)
Overweight/Obesity (BMI > 25)	
Yes	110 (69.6)
No	38 (30.4)
Children	
Yes	118 (72.8)
No	44 (27.2)
Adjuvant Treatment (ET)	
Adjuvant	139 (85.8)
Metastatic	23 (14.2)
Ongoing Therapy	
SERMs	38 (23.5)
Aromatase Inhibitors	114 (70.4)
SERDs	10 (6.2)

Figure 1. Relationship Breakup

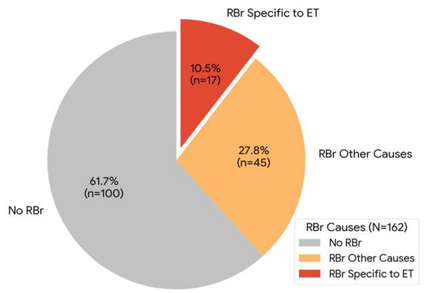


Figure 2. Contributing Factors for Relationship Breakup (Rbr)

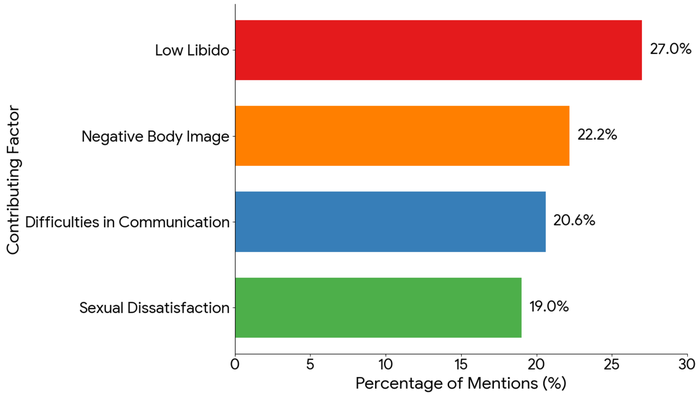
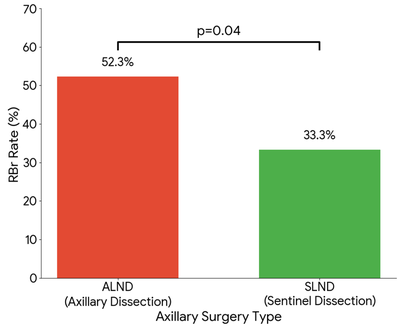


Figure 3. Axillary Dissection Increases RBr Risk)



KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- The main factors contributing to the breakup were cancer treatment (35.4) and low libido (27.0%).
- Axillary node dissection nearly doubles the risk of RBR, indicating that local surgical/functional trauma is a psychosocial risk.
- Among patients who maintained their relationships, the main contributing factor was affection (73%).

CONCLUSION

- ✓ There is a high incidence of RBr in breast cancer patients on ET.
- ✓ More than one-third of patients directly attribute the ending of the relationship to the treatment, citing factors such as libido, sexual satisfaction, and body image.
- ✓ Despite 55.6% of responders referring to a conflictual RBr, 74.1% of patients who ended their relationships expected a lasting relationship in the future.
- ✓ There is an urgent need for psychosocial support to manage the impacts of treatment on patients' relational lives, aiming to preserve their well-being and quality of life

Authors declare no conflict of interest.

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