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PERCEIVED QUALITY OF LIFE IN PORTUGUESE WOMEN WITH BREAST CANCER AND THEIR PARTNERS. PRESENTATION OF AN EXPLANATORY MODE

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AIMS: Living with breast cancer is an experience with losses and imposes great challenges to women and their partners. The disease and treatments introduce significant changes. The management of emotions and feelings, the ability to solve problems of daily life are put to the test, interfering with the perception of quality of life. Studies in this area focuses on identifying factors which will contribute to distress, and the problem of changes in body image and experience of sexuality occupied a prominent place. The purpose of this study was to understand how the various dimensions of pain and suffering and vulnerability to stress, strengthen the perception of quality of life of women with breast cancer and their partners **METHODS:** The authors tested a predictive model that explains the perceived quality of life for Portuguese women with confirmed diagnosis of breast cancer, and their partners. The 208 participants also were being followed in Oncology Centres. **RESULTS:** 46.6% are vulnerable to stress, 25% with criterion for emotional distress majority with a poor perception of quality of life. The test of global model shows that the psychological and existential suffering are predictors of vulnerability to stress, which in turn, explains the development of emotional disorders and a poor perception of quality of life **CONCLUSIONS:** For these women and their partners the physical suffering does not explain the development of frameworks for vulnerability-related stress. However, the way it is meant the disease appears as a determinant for the management of individual resources for the well-being and perceived quality of life. For these women, the presence of vulnerability to stress leads to the emergence of psychological distress, which does not happen with their partners who seem to get resources in order to support their wives. However and in contrast with the women, the vulnerability to stress in men, appears to lead to a negative evaluation of the environmental and social relations dimensions of quality of life

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