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## **Presentation of a psychosocial intervention programmer for groups of women mastectomy and their husbands**

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**Background:** The present intervention program on psycho-oncology aims to promote strategies of conflict to deal with three major variables associated to breast cancer: variables socio-culture's, psychological and medical. We want that the support groups of women's submitted to total mastectomy develop, among their companions, strategies to deal with the illness, regarding one of the major points of interest which are body image and self-esteem.

**Methods:** The population target of this intervention program, are women's which have been submitted to total mastectomy and their companions. The program is composed of 15 sessions of 90 minutes each, on a weekly bases. The goals regarding the sessions planning are: 1) to facilitate the emotional expression facing the illness and side effects of mastectomy and chemotherapy; 2) implement strategies of acceptance of the new body image; 3) to promote communication strategies to facilitate managing conflicts between the couple; 4) develop strategies to control unadaptive thoughts; 5) to promote emotional expression of the problems between the couple; 6) enhance self-esteem and promote changes related to personal and social enhance.

**Results:** As this program is still on initial phase of application, efficiency is expected: by the expression of feelings and conflict solving; by the way how is understand and the meaning of body image; the increasing of these woman self-esteem; by developing comfort strategies and problem solving; and by developing the quality of life of women's and their companions.

**Conclusion:** The woman who has been through a mastectomy deals with various social, psychological and physical changes which will influence her personal organization, her relationship with the others and particularly with her partner. Thus, the implementation of an intervention programme like this, new in the Portuguese health system, is completely necessary. The literature shows that the psychotherapy in oncological diseases particularly in mastectomy woman and her family, has a great impact in the post-surgical period and also on the adaptation to the illness, its treatment and prognosis. The goal of this intervention programme isn't limited to the decrease of specific symptoms but also aims to promote a shift in attitudes and to decrease or eliminate unhealthy behaviors or feelings.

**Research implications:** The planning of this intervention programme was based on previous research results which pointed out problematic areas and factors that influence the emotional balance and the life quality of these women and respective partners. Its implementation and results evaluation will allow the identification of positive and negative points which are fundamental to its future implementation in health care services that deal with these women.

**Clinical implication:** Most of the times, the groups psychological interventions in case of oncological disease are planned to the patient and not to his/her families or close friends. In this programme, the mastectomy woman partners are also included in the intervention in order to contribute to a better health and life quality of the family.

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