

**A PRESENTATION ON COMMON CHALLENGES FACED BY
BREAST CANCER PATIENTS**

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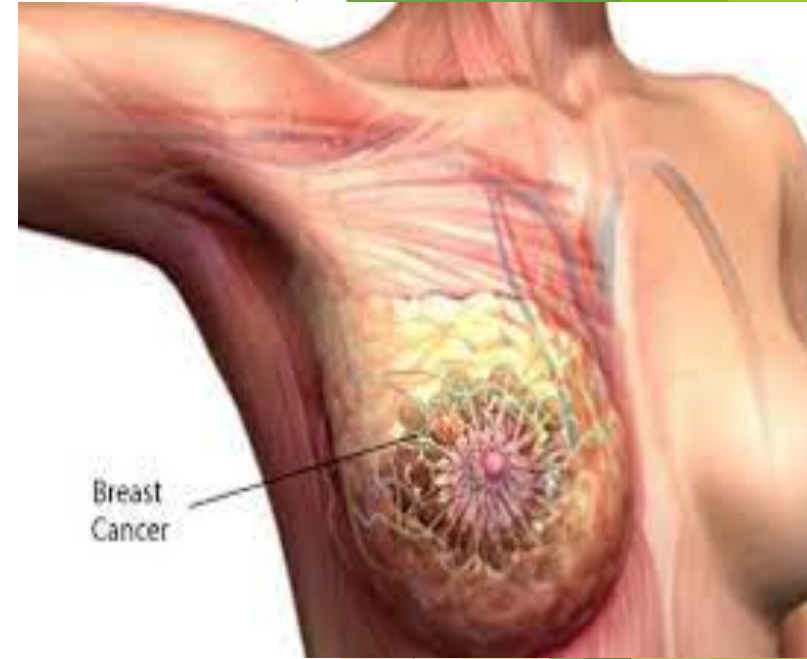
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INTRODUCTION

Globally, breast cancer (BC) remains the second leading cause of mortality among women, with increasing rates particularly in developing countries where the majority of cases are diagnosed in late stages. In Africa, it is the most commonly diagnosed cancer annually, with an estimated incidence of 168,690 cases and 74,072 related deaths in 2018. In Western Africa, although precise estimates are lacking as a result of absence of a cancer registry in most countries, recent GLOBOCAN data estimate age-standardized incidence and mortality rates of 37.3 and 17.8 per 100,000 female, respectively, in 2018 making it the most commonly diagnosed cancer in women, a shift from previous decades in which cervical cancer was the most commonly diagnosed cancer .



- ▶ Breast cancer diagnosis along with its treatment can contribute to physical, social, and psychological turmoil. These challenges extend to the periods of posttreatment and recovery. The psychosocial challenge in BC patients is related to the essence of the breasts in a woman's body image or femininity, sexuality, and motherhood.
- ▶ Additional concerns include physical appearance and disfigurement after treatment, uncertainty regarding recurrence in the future, periods of anxiety and depression, difficulty maintaining hope, fear of death, as well as loss of self-esteem for the patients and their loved ones, particularly life partners. Challenges also include the shock of a cancer diagnosis and fears about the future or the side effects of treatment, such as nausea and fatigue. Practical aspects of treatment such as the cost and travel also pose challenges

COMMON CHALLENGES FACED BY BREAST CANCER PATIENTS

At diagnosis:

- ▶ Denial

Coming to terms with diagnosis, i.e. difficulties with acceptance which may lead to delay in accepting course of treatment and thus aid metastasis

- ▶ Spiritual / religious belief

- ▶ Fear/ Anxiety

This ranges from losing support of spouse and children, family members or friends to fear of course of treatment, the unknown or outcome of the disease

□ **During treatment**

Physical challenges such as pain, fatigue, insomnia, burnout, and sexual dysfunction, alopecia, weight loss

□ **Low self esteem,**

This may result from loss of the breast and the physical changes as are result of treatment

□ **Financial challenge**

□ **Structural barriers**

After treatment

- ▶ Relationship issues: lost of the breast may result in lack of mutual care from spouse, this negative changes in relationship e.g. poor communication
- ▶ Intimacy might be affected due to low body image
- ▶ Sexual dysfunction. The breast is considered as a symbol of femininity and sexuality being cut off can affect sexual function.

**THANK YOU FOR
LISTENING!!**