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Cognitive development in breast cancer patients treated with chemotherapy

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Statement of the Problem: Cancer has been considered a public health problem, which affects the quality of life and the psychological well-being of the one who suffers from this condition. In Colombia, the type of cancer that presents with higher incidence is breast cancer and represents one of the main causes of mortality. Nowadays, the different treatments for this disease, such as chemotherapy, have proven their effectiveness in the prolongation of the life expectancy of patients. However, chemotherapy can affect other types of tissues or organs different from cancer cells, generating side effects such as nausea, loss of appetite and hair loss. Likewise, some patients report subjective complaints during and after finishing the chemotherapy process about their cognitive functions, mainly in processes such as attention, memory and planning. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the cognitive processes in patients with breast cancer during and after chemotherapy.

Method: A comparative study was conducted in which an assessment was made of processing speed, attention, memory, and executive functions in 14 women after receiving chemotherapy treatment and in 14 healthy women.

Results: The results show significant differences in the memory process, specifically in the evocation and working memory. No significant differences were found in the depression and anxiety scales.

Conclusion: Patients with breast cancer and received treatment with chemotherapy had lower performance in the verbal memory process compared to the control group, as well as a significant number of intrusions, which suggests involvement in this process.

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