Abstract:

OBJECTIVE: The aim of this study was to investigate changes in the quality of life (QoL) and body image among breast cancer patients over 2 years and to examine different predictive factors for QoL 2 years after the primary operation. METHODS: A total of 203 women with a primary diagnosis of breast cancer completed the questionnaires 2 weeks and 6, 12, 18, and 24 months after surgery. Quality of Life Questionnaire (QLQ-C30), Breast Cancer Specific Quality of Life Questionnaire Module (QLQ-BR23), Questionnaire on Stress in Cancer Patients (QSC-R23), Freiburg Personality Inventory (FPI-R), Life Orientation Test (LOT) were used as standardized measures. RESULTS: The overall QoL and most functional and symptom scales improved during the 2-year period. However, cognitive functioning, body image, and the three symptom scales of insomnia, constipation, and diarrhea did not change. Age was only capable of predicting physical functioning, whereas tumor size, axillary surgery, and adjuvant chemotherapy were not predictive of the long-term QoL functional scores. Initial distress was the most potent predictive factor for long-term QoL. Baseline functioning predicted functional QoL scores 2 years later. And higher scores for neuroticism were associated with a poorer QoL. However, optimism was not capable of predicting the QoL 2 years later. CONCLUSION: Screening measures...
should be implemented at the time when breast cancer is diagnosed, in order to identify psychologically vulnerable patients and offer them professional psycho-oncological help.