

Prevalence and Risk Factors of Persistent Pain after Treatment among Breast Cancer Patients in King Abdulaziz University Hospital: A Cross-Sectional Study

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ABSTRACT

Breast cancer (BC) presents a unique treatment challenge due to its individual variability. The potential side effects of multiple treatments, such as persistent pain and sensory disturbance, are a significant concern. Despite this, there are few studies on the prevalence of chronic pain in Saudi Arabia. Our study, therefore, holds particular relevance, as we aimed to assess the prevalence of persistent pain after therapy experienced by patients with BC and to investigate its risk factors. We conducted this non-interventional cross-sectional study in June 2021 at a King Abdulaziz University Hospital, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. All patients with BC who received surgical treatment and adjuvant radiotherapy were included. Data were collected through the hospital's medical records and validated questionnaires during phone calls. Our study included 234 participants, of whom 69.7% reported persistent pain after treatment, predominantly in the breast area. Most patients rated the pain as severe in almost all areas. Neoadjuvant chemotherapy ($p = 0.026$) and adjuvant chemotherapy ($p = 0.010$) were the only identifiable risk factors for chronic pain. A total of 114 patients took analgesics, which managed the pain for 95.6% of them. More than half (139) reported sensory disturbance after treatment, the arm being the most reported area. Persistent pain after treatment was highly prevalent in our study. Therefore, we strongly recommend that physicians enhance the management of this sequela during follow-up visits after treatment.

Keywords: Pain, breast cancer, radiotherapy, chemotherapy

Bahrain Med Bull 2026; 48 (3): 3420 - 3427

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