

## Efficacy of Psychotherapeutic Interventions in the Treatment of Breast Cancer Patients

### Ефективність психотерапевтичних втручань у роботі з онкопацієнтами з раком молочної залози

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#### ABSTRACT

**The aim of the article** is to provide a theoretical review of methods of psychological assistance for breast cancer patients to describe the most effective ways to apply them in the work of a psychotherapist, taking into account the characteristics of patients and disease specifics.

**Methods of the research.** The following theoretical research methods were used to solve the tasks: categorical and structural-functional methods, as well as analysis, synthesis, generalization, systematization, and comparison.

**Results and discussion.** Based on the conducted theoretical analysis, three main psychotherapeutic approaches were identified, which are most often used in the work with breast cancer patients: cognitive behavioral psychotherapy, existential psychotherapy, and psychodynamic psychotherapy.

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*It has been established that the methods of psychological intervention used within these approaches were effective and have contributed to improving a patient's psychological state and quality of life, and the results were maintained long after therapy ends. However, depending on the purpose of the psychological intervention, the stage of the treatment process, and the psychosocial characteristics of the client, their use may differ in certain circumstances. It was therefore determined that cognitive behavioral therapy should be optimally implemented in the early stages of breast cancer treatment to form adaptive coping strategies, promote psychological adaptation to the disease, overcome anxiety before treatment, reduce fatigue and pain, model immune function, and overcome insomnia and sexual dysfunction. In turn, existential therapy leads to greater efficiency in solving interpersonal issues, promoting personal growth, finding meaning in life, overcoming existential fears, enhancing social support, and managing patient emotions. The use of this kind of psychotherapy has been found to be effective at any time during treatment, depending on the client's needs, and had an advantage over other types of therapy in a group format. Among the approaches used in treating breast cancer patients, psychodynamic psychotherapy is the least researched. This type of intervention is highly effective when it comes to overcoming internal conflicts and reducing anxiety, depression, and fatigue.*

*The difference between psychotherapy and psychological counseling in the treatment of breast cancer patients was also outlined. A comparative analysis of the effectiveness of psychotherapy and social support groups was conducted. The latest approaches to psychotherapy with breast cancer patients were described.*

**Conclusions.** *The results of this review indicate that the choice of the optimal method of psychotherapeutic intervention for breast cancer patients will contribute to the rapid achievement of a positive outcome and its stability for a long time. In each specific case, the recommended type of therapy will depend on several factors: the stage of the treatment process and the stage of the disease, the patient's request, his current psychological state, and psycho-social characteristics.*

**Key words:** *cancer patient, cancer, breast cancer, psychotherapy, cognitive behavioral psychotherapy, existential psychotherapy, psychodynamic psychotherapy, psycho-oncology.*

## Introduction

Breast cancer is the most common type of cancer among women. According to the World Health Organization, the in-

cidence rate of breast cancer increases by 1.2-1.8% every year (Łukasiewicz, Czeczelewski & Forma, 2021). Although in recent years the probability of survival of women with breast cancer has increased due to the improvement of screening (which allows detecting the disease at an early stage), the diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer are extremely stressful events that can cause an excessive psychological burden. This is especially evident during the first year after diagnosis. Women with breast cancer are forced to go through a series of difficult medical procedures, which are often accompanied by symptoms of anxiety and depression. This includes, in particular, radical mastectomy, radiation therapy, and chemotherapy. Psychosocial interventions can help breast cancer patients adapt to their disease, reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression, and improve their quality of life (Blake-Mortimer, Gore-Felton & Kimerling, 1999). In addition, psychotherapy has a beneficial effect on physiological processes that are directly involved in the functioning of the immune system and are associated with the processes of pain and inflammation (Antoni, Lechner & Diaz, 2009). But for the highest effectiveness of psychotherapeutic measures, the strategy and method of intervention must be carefully chosen, based on the stage of disease treatment, its form, the patient's personal needs, capabilities, etc. To achieve this, it is necessary to investigate in which cases a certain type of psychological counseling or psychotherapy will be effective.

Many scientific articles are devoted to the theoretical review of various types of psychological interventions used by psychotherapists in the treatment process of breast cancer patients. Thus, one of the works (Iordechescu & Paica, 2021) considers some psychotherapeutic methods and techniques: cognitive-behavioral stress management, art therapy, mindfulness-based therapy, acceptance and commitment therapy, compassion-focused therapy, and experiential psychotherapy. The main focus of these types of therapy is stress management in cancer patients.

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Another study compares the effectiveness of different types of psychotherapy within the existential-humanistic approach: meaning-based therapy, supportive-expressive therapy, experiential-existential therapy, and cognitive-existential psychotherapy (Vos, Craig & Cooper, 2015). In turn, short-term psychodynamic therapy is often compared with schema therapy. In particular, in one study it was found that chemotherapy is more effective for women with breast cancer for the growth of "psychological capital" (Alizadeh, Mirzaian & Abbasi, 2022).

However, many works in which psychotherapeutic approaches are reflected still remain narrowly specific, that is, focused on comparing methods of psychological interventions that belong to one approach. A thorough theoretical review that would summarize the obtained results from the point of the feasibility of their practical application in work with breast cancer patients is currently lacking the scientific literature, even though an empirical comparison of the effectiveness of various types of psychotherapy is a clear advantage of existing research. In addition, many modern methods of psychotherapeutic interventions are often neglected in comparative analyses.

Therefore, this study aims to conduct a meta-analysis of existing works devoted to psychosocial assistance for breast cancer patients and to determine how they can most effectively be applied to treatment, taking into account the characteristics of clients and their disease.

### **Research methods**

The following theoretical research methods were used to solve the tasks: categorical and structural-functional methods, as well as analysis, synthesis, generalization, systematization, and comparison.

### **Results and discussion**

Typically, three main approaches are used in scientific publications that explore various psychological therapies for cancer patients: cognitive behavioral therapy, psychodynamic therapy,

and existential-humanistic therapy (Orlova, 2011). But currently, integrative approaches (for example, cognitive-existential therapy (Gagnon, Fillion & Robitaille, 2015)) and some particular subfields of psychological assistance (for example, art therapy (Öster, Svensk & Magnusson, 2006)) are also being actively studied. In addition, separating psychological counseling from psychotherapy is also important. Both methods are considered useful for cancer patients, but counseling is more focused on achieving specific short-term goals: adaptation to the disease, reducing the level of psychological distress, correction of body image, etc. In contrast, psychotherapy works with deeper problems, which concentrates on solving personal problems and is characterized by a longer duration (Telli, Gradishar & Ward, 2019).

Cognitive-behavioral psychotherapy is aimed at working with thoughts and behaviors that cause psychological deterioration. For cancer patients, this approach can be used to relieve symptoms of anxiety and depression, as well as pain and fatigue. Cognitive behavioral therapy is a standard approach used in working with breast cancer patients. This type of therapy is often recommended as a supplement to the usual treatment of the disease. The effectiveness of cognitive behavioral therapy to reduce psychological distress and pain in breast cancer patients was the subject of meta-analysis research for the first time in 2006 (Tatrow & Montgomery, 2006). The authors concluded that this type of intervention has a significant impact on improving the psychological state of cancer patients. This study also found no differences between group and individual psychotherapy for pain alleviation, with individual therapy having more noticeable effects on distress reduction than group therapy. Furthermore, the efficacy of cognitive behavioral treatment for cancer patients with and without metastases was shown to be the same.

Cognitive behavioral stress management therapy can help cancer patients with early-stage breast cancer by enhancing their emotional health and immune system (McGregor, Antoni & Boyers, 2004), lowering cortisol levels (Crueess, Antoni &

McGregor, 2000), and overcoming depressive symptoms (Antoni, Lechner & Diaz, 2009). The results of this type of therapy must have a lasting impact. Thus, in the work of J.M. Stagl and colleagues (Stagl, Lechner & Carver, 1998), the survival and frequency of relapses in cancer patients with non-metastatic breast cancer were studied 11 years after undergoing cognitive behavioral stress management therapy. According to the findings, the treatment group's members had a lower all-cause mortality rate than the controls. The authors note that this topic requires further research, in particular, to study the mechanisms that explain the obtained data.

The efficacy of cognitive behavioral treatment for breast cancer survivors is discussed in another research (Ye, Du & Zhou, 2018). In particular, patients experienced a statistically significant reduction in anxiety and depression symptoms with a medium effect size.

According to the findings of a recent study (Onyedibe, Ifeagwazi & Charles, 2021), which focused on the efficacy of group cognitive behavioral therapy for emotional regulation in women with breast cancer, the relationship between adaptive and maladaptive strategies of emotional regulation shifted in favor of the latter after the implementation of a 12-week intervention program. Another paper (Qiu, Chen, & Gao, 2013) reported that cognitive behavioral therapy can be successfully used to treat depression, as well as to improve the overall quality of life and self-esteem in breast cancer patients.

Sexual issues are frequently experienced by women who have breast cancer. This, in turn, significantly affects their quality of life and sexual relations. Meta-analysis J. Xu et al. (Xu, Xue & Li, 2022) includes 15 studies devoted to the effect of psychotherapy on sexual dysfunction in women with breast cancer. According to the results of the analysis, psychological interventions used in the psychotherapy of breast cancer patients lead to a significant improvement in their sexual function, sexual satisfaction, and sexual relationships, and also reduce sexual

distress. In particular, cognitive behavioral psychotherapy, psychoeducation, and psychosexual counseling were characterized by high efficiency.

Sleep disorders, such as insomnia, are widespread in breast cancer patients. For women suffering from breast cancer, this clinical syndrome has many physiological and psychological consequences. Insomnia can be treated both pharmacologically and using cognitive behavioral therapy. The benefits of psychotherapy treatment include the ability to prevent the risk of drug interactions by nonoverloading cancer patients with additional pharmacological treatment. In addition, cognitive behavioral therapy makes it possible to simultaneously work with a wide range of somatic problems, such as, for example, fatigue and pain (Fiorentino & Ancoli-Israel 2006). According to the study (Quesnel, Savard & Simard, 2003), treating insomnia with cognitive behavioral therapy helped breast cancer patients sleep better and for longer periods while also significantly improving their mood, and quality of life (general and cognitive), as well as reducing general and physical fatigue. We observe similar results in other works (Ma, Hall & Ngo, 2021). Some significant facets of the application of cognitive behavioral therapy for the management of insomnia in breast cancer patients are addressed in the theoretical meta-analysis from 2016 (Aricò, Raggi & Ferri, 2016). They include, in particular, a reduction in menopausal symptoms, a decrease in pharmaceutical usage, as well as a reduction in anxiety and depression levels. At the same time, such improvements in sleep quality persist for a long time (up to 1 year) and are statistically significant.

The effectiveness of cognitive behavioral therapy for breast cancer patients was also compared with other types of psychological interventions. Group training in relaxation and guided imagery has been found to work better with sleep quality and fatigue reduction, while cognitive behavioral group therapy was more effective in reducing health-related external locus of control (Cohen & Fried 2007).

There are different types of psychological interventions based on a humanistic-existential approach. In particular, mindfulness-based therapy, supportive-expressive therapy, experimental-existential therapy, and cognitive-existential therapy are often used in the treatment of cancer patients (Vos, Craig & Cooper, 2015). This type of psychological intervention can be useful for finding meaning in life, coping with existential problems, increasing social support, improving relationships, and expressing and managing disease-related emotions.

Existential group psychotherapy is a classic approach in the psychotherapy of cancer patients. Within the framework of this direction, it is also possible to distinguish various types of psychological interventions. Thus, in the work of L. Grassi and colleagues (Grassi, Sabato & Caruso, 2021), short reorientational and existential group psychotherapy for breast cancer patients is considered. This approach combines methods from cognitive-analytic psychotherapy and meaning-centered psychotherapy. Several significant motivations that recur in breast cancer patients' experiences were identified through analysis of session transcripts and letters participants wrote after therapy. They included: feelings of stigmatization and loneliness, guilt, nostalgia, and "revival". In particular, the letters highlighted the themes of togetherness, gratitude, and acceptance. This work confirms the importance of qualitative methods of analysis for researching the effectiveness of psychological interventions in work with cancer patients because they make it possible to study the psychological reality of people suffering from cancer and to identify constructs on which further quantitative research can be focused.

Interpersonal therapy is effective in enhancing the quality of life in breast cancer patients who also exhibit symptoms of anxiety and depression (Belay, Labisso & Tigeneh, 2022). The intervention program's implementation, with a total duration of 4 to 6 sessions, resulted in a significant reduction in anxiety and depression among cancer patients and an overall improvement

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in quality of life in many areas (in particular, in physical well-being and aspects related to health).

The effectiveness of meaning-based group therapy was compared to supportive group therapy and the lack of any psychological interventions in the work of Spek and colleagues (van der Spek, Vos & van Uden-Kraan, 2017). In terms of enhancing personal meaning, psychological well-being, and psychological adjustment to the disease, meaning-based group therapy was found to be much more helpful for breast cancer survivors than supportive group therapy. This kind of psychological intervention also helps to lessen psychological distress over the long run.

Another study (Vos, Craig & Cooper, 2015), which compared the effectiveness of existential group therapy and a social support group for women with breast cancer, did not find significant improvements as a result of the use of these types of psychological interventions. At the same time, the authors report positive changes in body image and recreation, but these changes did not depend on the type of interventions.

The psychological well-being of cancer patients, particularly those with breast cancer, can be also affected by positive psychotherapy. For example, the results of the study by R.P. Meibodi and colleagues (Meibodi, Meftagh & Shahangian, 2021) showed that for women with breast cancer, this type of psychological intervention is effective in increasing the level of happiness, strength, satisfaction, benevolence, and semantic dimensions of life. The outcomes of earlier research on this subject are supported by this result. Thus, it was noted in a previous study (Dowlatabadi, Ahmadi & Sorbi, 2016) that the examined impact of group positive psychotherapy on the psychological well-being of breast cancer patients that this type of intervention aids in lowering psychological stress and enhancing overall health due to the improvement of depressive symptoms.

Treatment for breast cancer patients frequently includes cognitive-existential group therapy. Integrated, holistic, and comprehensive, it combines the existential dimension with

medical care. Cognitive-existential therapy considers a person's physical, psychological, social, existential, and spiritual dimensions (Gagnon, Fillion & Robitaille, 2015). Studies (Kissane, Bloch & Smith, 2003) examining the efficacy of this strategy for women with early-stage breast cancer revealed that three years of cognitive-existential group therapy can help cancer patients experience less psychological distress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms. In addition, women who received psychotherapy showed improvements in family functioning. The effectiveness of this type of treatment, according to the authors, depends on how group members and therapists interact as well as on the group's overall dynamics and the psychotherapist's education and experience.

Early studies report significant effects of group therapy for breast cancer patients. D. Spiegel and colleagues (Spiegel, Morrow & Classen, 1999) reported that about the beneficial effect of supportive-expressive group therapy on symptoms of anxiety and depression in women with metastatic breast cancer, and, as noted by the authors, the obtained result did not depend on the stage of the disease. Another study (Van Der Pompe, Duivenvoorden & Antoni, 1997) found that patients with breast cancer who got short-term existential group therapy had lower levels of pro-inflammatory markers in their blood (cortisol and prolactin, NK cells, CD4 cells, and CD8 cells).

A relatively small number of studies are devoted to the effectiveness of the psychodynamic approach in psychotherapy of breast cancer patients. This type of therapy can be effective for understanding psychological conflicts and determining mental disorders in cancer patients, as well as for planning useful psychological interventions (Straker, 1998).

According to M.E. Beutel and colleagues (Beutel, Weißflog & Leuteritz, 2014), short-term psychodynamic psychotherapy can treat a wide range of depressive disorders in patients with non-metastatic breast cancer. In addition, this type of psychological intervention improved the functional quality of life of

women with breast cancer. The authors also highlight certain limitations of the study, which include delayed post-therapy assessments and a high dropout rate. In addition, a number of studies (Weissflog, Braehler & Leuteritz, 2015) have also found that short-term psychodynamic therapy can significantly reduce symptoms of depression, as well as fatigue in breast cancer patients. Psychodynamic therapy has also been shown to reduce fear of death, depression, and feel of loneliness significantly in breast cancer patients, and the effects were maintained for two months following the completion of the sessions, with no reversion to baseline clinical indicators after that (Abed, Hossein & Shahrbanoo, 2020).

When comparing the effectiveness of short-term psychodynamic therapy with scheme therapy for women with breast cancer, it was found that the second one makes a stronger contribution to the development of psychological capital (Alizadeh, Mirzaian & Abbasi, 2022). At the same time, both psychotherapeutic approaches maintained their influence on psychological capital during the six months.

Transactional analysis shares many features with psychoanalysis. There are a few studies devoted to the efficacy of this approach in the treatment of breast cancer patients. For example, the work of E. Aydin (Aydin, 2008) describes the results of a transactional interpretation of a biographical narrative in an interview with four women who were diagnosed with breast cancer. The author identified six main characteristics of cancer patients, as well as four stressful factors (including breast cancer) that occurred in their lives. It is assumed that using found script beliefs and defense mechanisms within the context of a transactional approach would help breast cancer patients grow personally and improve their psychological state. There are other methods of psychotherapeutic interventions that are used in the therapy of cancer patients, but they do not belong to the three main approaches discussed earlier. For example, one paper showed the positive effect of psychotherapy with musical intervention on the quality of

life of patients with breast cancer undergoing radiation therapy. This was also accompanied by a significant reduction in symptoms of anxiety and depression. In addition, the results of using this type of therapy were reflected in relevant biological indicators, in particular, in markers of oxidative stress and inflammation (Zeppegno, Kregli & Ferrante, 2021).

Telephone counseling of cancer patients by nurses with appropriate psychological training also has its specificity. This type of counseling allows providing clients with psychological, social, and informational support. Based on the results of a meta-analysis of 16 studies (Suh & Lee 2017) devoted to telephone counseling of cancer patients, it was determined that adopting this type of therapeutic intervention resulted in a significant decrease in cancer symptoms and mental distress among cancer patients. At the same time, cancer patients improved their health-related quality of life and increased their ability to self-care. The authors note that a more significant effect was observed in those works that included a control group and was based on strong theoretical foundations. A recent study in which the effects of telephone counseling were studied on a sample of breast cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy (Nazarpour, Mohammadipour & Mohammadi, 2021) showed that this type of psychological intervention has a positive effect on the empowerment of cancer patients. This, in turn, helps with adaptation to the diagnosis and treatment of the disease and reduces the intensity of both general and specific symptoms of cancer.

An interesting method of psychological intervention, which is sometimes used in work with cancer patients, is counseling based on reflective writing. However, due to the limited number of studies that have been committed to this method, its efficacy for breast cancer patients has not yet been demonstrated incontrovertibly. Thus, in the study by M.F. Amleh and colleagues (Amleh & Jondi, 2021), which included 15 cancer patients in the experimental group, it is reported that there is a difference in the severity of mental disorders in women with

breast cancer before and after the implementation of the counseling program. The authors also note that such sociodemographic indicators as the level of education and socioeconomic status are associated with the level of mental disorders in women with breast cancer.

Short-term integrative counseling also proved to be effective in improving the psychological well-being of breast cancer patients (Kiley-Morgan, Thompson & Shravat, 2021). In particular, after the implementation of this intervention, cancer patients experienced a statistically significant decrease in symptoms of anxiety and depression and an increase in self-esteem. In addition, during the qualitative analysis, the authors identified three main themes that arose from cancer patients during counseling: acceptance, awareness, and moving forward.

Psychotherapy of cancer patients involves dealing with fatigue. A meta-analysis of T.D Vannorsdall and colleagues (Vannorsdall, Straub, & Saba, 2021) showed that exercise has a stronger effect on cognitive, physical, and general fatigue associated with cancer than psychotherapeutic interventions. The authors note that further research is needed to determine the most effective forms, duration, and intensity of exercises.

Psychotherapy based on the body-mind-spirit principle (BMS therapy) is aimed at healing and personal growth (Sreevani, Reddemma & Chan, 2013). Within this approach, the client is considered as a whole. In contrast to traditional psychotherapy, which primarily concentrates on life history and thought analysis, BMS therapy gives attention to the relationship between a person's mental, physical, and spiritual experiences. Body-mind-spirit therapy can include a wide variety of techniques, including mindfulness, yoga therapy, hypnosis, meditation, nutritional and health counseling, EMDR, along with biological and neurobiological feedback. Psychotherapy typically involves active mental engagement, meaning the therapist focuses on the client's thoughts, feelings, goals, and memories. However, in the modern world, there are more and more psychotherapeutic

approaches that arouse the interest of researchers and practitioners. For example, body-oriented psychotherapy is based on the principles of somatic psychology and works with the mind-body connection. Transpersonal psychology, on the other hand, focuses on a person's spiritual realm.

In another study (Hsiao, Jow & Kuo, 2012), it was shown that group therapy based on the BMS principle for women who survived breast cancer treatment promotes an active search for the meaning of life and opportunities for personal growth, and its effectiveness was higher than psychoeducational measures. In addition, this type of psychological intervention helped to stabilize the neuroendocrine regulation of cortisol in response to everyday stress.

Psychotherapy for cancer patients occasionally makes use of Stanislav Grof's transpersonal approach, which was developed in the 1960s. Transpersonal psychotherapy is based on the empirical experience of non-traditional and esoteric teachings that focus on the so-called phenomena of altered states of consciousness. Although the effectiveness of this method does not have a sufficient evidence base, it sometimes appears in studies of psychological interventions for cancer patients. For example, a 2021 article by Iranian scientists (Sajadian, Zaharakar & Asadpour, 2021) reported the beneficial effects of transpersonal psychotherapy on reducing fear of recurrence among breast cancer survivors. In addition, the authors report a significant difference in the constituent components of the recurrence fear (triggers, severity, psychological distress, coping strategies, functional impairment, and understanding) between the control and experimental groups. Reducing the fear of recurrence improves the stress state of cancer patients who have survived breast cancer treatment, and therefore contributes to improving the quality of life.

The works that we reviewed earlier were mainly concerned with individual psychotherapy. However, it has been proven that group therapy has a beneficial effect on the mental health of patients. A recent study (Rosendahl, Alldredge & Burlingame,

2021) presented a meta-analysis of works published over the past 30 years, which focused on the effectiveness of group therapy, in particular, for cancer patients. The authors conclude that group therapy has the same effect on patients' mental health as individual therapy. In addition, the importance of feedback and cohesion in the therapeutic group to achieve better results is emphasized.

Group psychotherapy for breast cancer patients can also be effective in an online format. Thus, the study of the quality of life of cancer patients during the Covid-19 pandemic (Abuladze, Cholikidze & Esakia, 2021) focused on the problem of the impact of social distancing caused by quarantine on the psychological state of women with breast cancer and cervical cancer. The authors claim that 3-month online group psychotherapy had a positive effect on the physical, cognitive, emotional, and social functioning of cancer patients under the conditions of Covid-19. At the same time, a statistically significant difference between the indicators before and after psychotherapy was present in the group of women with breast cancer. The authors noted that for a correct interpretation of the results, the found patterns require additional research and an increase in the sample size.

## **Conclusions**

Psychological assistance is an integral part of the treatment of breast cancer patients. In addition to improving the psychological state, psychotherapeutic interventions allow influencing the physiological factors associated with the disease: reducing fatigue and pain, lowering the level of stress hormones, and modeling immune function.

Psychotherapeutic approaches that appear in works devoted to psychological assistance to cancer patients fall into three main directions: psychodynamic, existential-humanistic, and cognitive-behavioral. However, there are other methods of psychological interventions that do not belong to any of these direc-

tions but have also demonstrated effectiveness in the treatment of cancer patients. Choosing the optimal type of psychotherapeutic interventions for each breast cancer patient is a necessary step to achieving the greatest effectiveness of treatment. The type of psychotherapy may depend on the ultimate goal of interventions (stress management, personal growth, interpersonal relationships, improvement of quality of life, overcoming anxiety and depression, etc.), on the preferred form of interaction with the therapist (individual or group sessions), on the stage of treatment (newly established diagnosis, surgical intervention, chemotherapy, recurrence, remission, etc.) and from the psychosocial characteristics of the cancer patient.

According to the theoretical analysis, the most studied psychotherapeutic approach, which is utilized with cancer patients and has multiple proven effects, is cognitive-behavioral therapy. It is recommended to be used in the early stages of treatment for adaptation to the disease, stress management, development of effective coping strategies, and overcoming treatment anxiety. Cognitive behavioral therapy works effectively with sexual dysfunction, insomnia, as well as with fatigue, and pain associated with the disease. The existential approach, in turn, can be used at any stage of treatment to solve deeper psychological problems, such as fear of death, search for the meaning of life, interpersonal relationships, expression and overcoming of emotions related to the disease, etc. Both group and individual therapy are effective. The psychodynamic approach is less studied from the point of view of psychotherapy for breast cancer patients, but it has proven effective in reducing anxiety and depression.

When determining which type of psychological intervention is most effective in working with a particular breast cancer patient, faster and more stable results can be achieved, which will positively impact the treatment process and the quality of life of breast cancer patients.



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**Нефедова Тетяна. Ефективність психотерапевтичних втручань у роботі з онкопацієнтами з раком молочної залози.**

**Мета статті** – здійснити теоретичний огляд методів психологічної допомоги хворим на рак молочної залози, описати оптимальні шляхи їхнього застосування в роботі психотерапевта з урахуванням особливостей пацієнтів та специфіки їхнього захворювання.

**Методи та методики дослідження.** Для розв'язання поставлених завдань були застосовані такі теоретичні методи дослідження: категоріальний та структурно-функціональний методи, а також аналіз, синтез, узагальнення, систематизація, порівняння.

**Результати дослідження.** На основі проведеного теоретичного аналізу було виділено три основні психотерапевтичні підходи, які найчастіше застосовуються в роботі з онкопацієнтами з раком молочної залози: когнітивно-поведінкова, екзистенційна та психодинамічна психотерапія.

Встановлено, що методи психологічного втручання, які використовуються в рамках даних підходів, мають доведену ефективність і сприяють покращенню психологічного стану та якості життя пацієнтів, а досягнені результати зберігаються тривалий час після завершення терапії. Проте комплекс ситуацій, в яких їх варто застосовувати, може відрізнятися залежно від мети психологічного втручання, етапу лікувального процесу та психо-соціальних

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особливостей клієнта. Відтак, визначено, що когнітивно-поведінкову терапію оптимально впроваджувати на ранніх етапах лікування раку молочної залози для формування адаптивних копінг-стратегій, сприяння психологічної адаптації до захворювання, стрес-менеджменту, подолання тривоги перед лікуванням, зниження втоми та болю, моделювання імунної функції, подолання інсомнії та сексуальних розладів. Екзистенційна терапія, своєю чергою, характеризується більшою ефективністю у вирішенні міжособистісних проблем, в сприянні особистісному зростанні та пошуку сенсу життя, подоланні екзистенційних страхів, посиленні соціальної підтримки, полегшенні вираження та керування емоціями, що пов'язані з захворюванням. Визначено, що цей вид психотерапії може використовуватися на будь-якому етапі лікування, залежно від запиту клієнта, і має перевагу перед іншими в форматі терапевтичної групи. Психодинамічна психотерапія є найменш вивченим підходом, який застосовується в роботі з онкопацієнтами з раком молочної залози. Головна мета даного виду інтервенцій – подолання внутрішніх конфліктів клієнта, зниження тривоги, депресії та втоми, пов'язаної із захворюванням.

Окреслено різницю між психотерапією та психологічним консультуванням у роботі з онкопацієнтами з раком молочної залози. Проведено порівняльний аналіз ефективності психотерапії та груп соціальної підтримки. Описано новітні підходи для психотерапії онкопацієнтів з РМЗ.

**Висновки.** Виходячи з результатів теоретичного огляду, вибір оптимального методу психотерапевтичного втручання для онкопацієнтів з раком молочної залози сприятиме швидкому досягненню результату та його стабільності впродовж тривалого часу після завершення терапії. В кожному конкретному випадку рекомендований вид терапії залежатиме від низки факторів: етапу лікувального процесу та стадії захворювання, запиту пацієнта, його поточного психологічного стану та психо-соціальних характеристик.

**Ключові слова:** онкопацієнт, онкозахворювання, рак молочної залози, психотерапія, когнітивно-поведінкова психотерапія, екзистенційна психотерапія, психодинамічна психотерапія, психоонкологія.

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