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Expectations for the first postoperative year following breast reconstruction

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Introduction

The primary goal with breast reconstruction is to improve body image, health-related quality of life and meet the patients' expectations of breast appearance and functionality.

The health-related quality of life can be measured with the BREAST-Q, a breast-specific patient-reported outcome measure.

The aim of this study was to assess the patient expectations for the first postoperative year following breast reconstruction surgery.

Materials and methods

- Cohort study: patients awaiting breast reconstruction in April 2020

- BREAST-Q: Reconstruction Expectations

- First postoperative year:
  - Mental adjustment
  - Breast appearance
  - Recovery of abdominal wall function

- BREAST-Q subscales analyzed according to the developer's instructions

- Written consent obtained from all patients

Table 1: Characteristics of study participants (N=57)

Variable	Median (IQR)
Age (years)	56 (48-63)
BMI (kg/m2)	26 (24-28)

Variable	N (%)
Active smoker	
Yes	3 (5.3)
No	54 (94.7)
ASA-classification	
ASA I	39 (68.4)
ASA II-III	18 (31.6)
Type of cancer	
Not cancer	7 (12.3)
Ductal carcinoma in situ	2 (3.5)
Ductal carcinoma	33 (57.9)
Lobular carcinoma	8 (14.0)
Other or unclear	7 (12.3)

Results

57 patients (39%)

Reason for mastectomy
- Breast cancer 43 (75%)
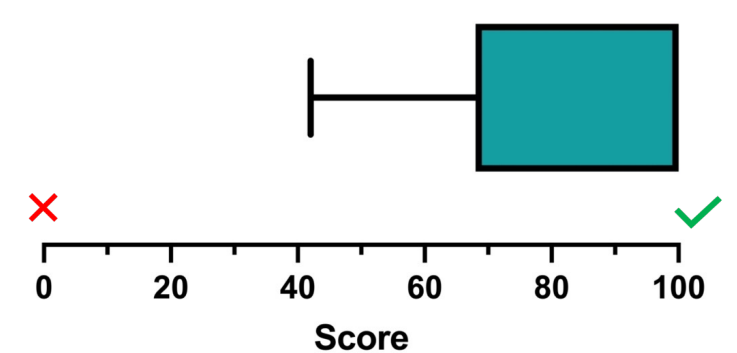- Cancer-related gene 7 (12%)
- Both 7 (12%)

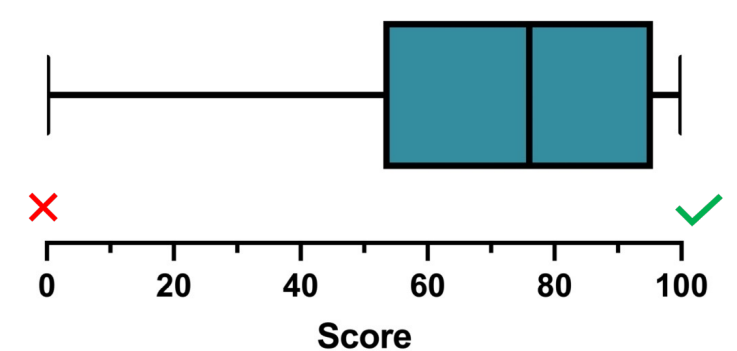Expectations for emotional recovery and return to normal life high (median 100, IQR 68-100)

Breast appearance, shape, and clothing fit expected to be close to normal (median 76, IQR 53-96)

Abdominal wall appearance and fuction near normal (median 6, IQR 5-7)

Conclusions

Patients have high expectations regarding mental adjustment and physical appearance after breast reconstruction.

Abdominal wall function and aesthetic are expected to return to normal without major complications.

Improvement of preoperative patient encounters and information prior to reconstructive surgery can optimize patient satisfaction.

Expectations for Coping

Expectations for Appearance when Clothed

Expectations for Physical Well-being: Abdomen