

Research Paper

The Relationship between Self-Esteem and Psychological Well-Being Among Breast Cancer Survivors: A Correlational Study

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ABSTRACT

Cancer survivors may face degeneration in their self-esteem, which in turn can have significant impact on their psychological well-being. Present study aims at investigating & evaluating how self-esteem, can notably affect the psychological well-being of breast cancer survivors. Present study employed 'Psychological Well-Being Scale' (PWBS-SDCP) by Sisodia & Chaudhary & 'Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale' by Morris Rosenberg (1965). With these, a socio-demographic sheet was also attached. A convenient sampling technique was used with a sample size of 35, in which 35 females surviving breast cancer were considered. Descriptive statistics & inferential statistics like Pearson correlation method were used for analysing the data. Self-esteem & psychological well-being were shown to be correlated at a $r=0.708967$ ($p<0.01$) correlation coefficient. The positive correlation coefficient ($r=0.708967$) implies that self-esteem & psychological well-being in breast cancer patients have a favourable association. The study is done on an underrated field of psycho-oncology which directly relates self-esteem level of breast cancer patients with their psychological well-being. As many other studies already done are less, there is a need for more studies to be conducted in such a field.

Keywords: Breast Cancer, Self-Esteem, Psychological Well-Being

Breast cancer is not just a physical health problem, but also a psychological one. Anxiety, despair, dread, & uncertainty can all be brought on by getting a breast cancer diagnosis, which can be a terrible experience. Understanding the psychological backdrop of the disease is crucial since the psychological effects of breast cancer might be quite severe.

The fear of death is one of the main psychological causes of breast cancer. Breast cancer is a fatal illness, & the thought of passing away may be paralysing. Anxiety, sadness, & other mental health problems might result from this worry. Breast cancer diagnosis frequently

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results in women feeling as though they have no control over their bodies or lives, which can make them feel even worse.

Body image is another psychological element related to breast cancer. Surgery to remove the malignant tissue is frequently performed on women, which might alter their physical appearance. A sense of guilt, humiliation, or self-consciousness may result from this. A woman's feeling of femininity & sexuality may be impacted if one or both of her breasts are lost. Having breast cancer can have a psychological effect on relationships as well. Breast cancer patients could feel guilty or like a burden to their loved ones after receiving their diagnosis. The impact their diagnosis will have on their loved ones & friends may also cause them anxiety. Breast cancer survivorship may be difficult as well. Making decisions regarding therapy for a breast cancer diagnosis may be stressful & overwhelming for the affected woman. It can be physically & emotionally taxing to have treatment side effects.

Self – Esteem:

Your subjective opinion of your total value or worth is referred to as self-esteem. It expresses how much self-confidence you have in your skills & personality, like self-respect. It may affect your motivation, mental health, & your general quality of life if you have a good sense of self-worth. The problem arises when one's self-esteem (SE) is either very high or excessively low. You may achieve a balance which is ideal for you by having a better awareness of your own degree of self-esteem.

Important components of one's self-worth are:

- Self-confidence
- Secure sentiments
- Recognition
- Association
- Having a sense of competence

Decision-making, bonds, emotional/general well-being are all wedged by self-esteem. Furthermore, it shapes provocation as those who exhibit a healthy, affirmative self-view are attentive of their aptitude & may be motivated to face novel encounters.

Healthy self-esteem has four main elements. These are:

- a solid grasp of one's proficiencies.
- a convincing tie with oneself is a criterion for being able to preserve eloquent relationships with others.
- reasonable & realistic prospects for yourself
- an alertness of one's desires & the competence to communicate those demands.

People with poor self-esteem typically feel less confident in their skills & may have second thoughts while making decisions. Because they doubt their ability to succeed, they might not be inspired to try novel things. People having low self-esteem might struggle to communicate their needs & form relationships. They could also lack confidence & believe they are unlovable & undeserving.

People with excessively high self-esteem can overestimate their abilities & feel entitled to success even when they lack the skills to support their confidence in themselves. As they are

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so preoccupied with seeing their own selves as perfect, they may experience relationship difficulties & put barriers in their way to self-improvement.

Psychological Well-Being

The term "psychological well-being" describes a condition of peak mental health & functioning that is characterised by happy feelings, high levels of resilience, & a sense of meaning & purpose in life. It is a multidimensional construct that covers a variety of psychological experiences, such as an individual's emotional, cognitive, & social functioning.

Positive emotions are important for psychological well-being (PWB). Happiness, pleasure, thankfulness, & satisfaction are some examples of these sensations. Positive feelings may significantly improve a person's mental health by increasing resilience & coping mechanisms in the face of stress & hardship.

Resilience is a significant component of psychological well-being. This speaks to the capacity to overcome obstacles & overcome the challenges & failures of life. Instead, then being a fixed quality, resilience is a talent that can be developed via a variety of techniques, such as cognitive restructuring, mindfulness, & social support.

The potential to search meaning & purpose of life is also strongly correlated with psychological well-being. One must believe their life is important & satisfying, & they must have a clear understanding of their values, priorities, & ambitions. A feeling of direction & significance may give people inspiration, & it can also increase their resilience when they face challenging circumstances.

Another crucial component of psychological well-being is social support. Having solid social ties & adoring relationships with family, friends, & neighbours falls under this category. Social support may foster sentiments of belonging & connection while acting as a buffer against stress & hardship.

A feeling of self-efficacy & independence is essential for psychological well-being. This entails having self-assurance in one's skills & judgement as well as a sense of control over one's life. Greater self-efficacy & autonomy can foster improved resiliency, coping mechanisms, & a sense of personal empowerment.

Indicators for health promotion & preventive efforts should be based on one's quality of life, according to recent contributions of positive psychology (**Santisi et al., 2020**). Positive plus negative, rather than positive minus negative, is how well-being is modelled in PP 2.0 (**Wong, 2011**). In other words, in addition to well-being that is founded on good factors, the ability to transcend & transform unfavourable experiences may also contribute to well-being. Life becomes more vibrant & fuller of significance when one is in good health. When we can access the joyous springs, all our hardships & sorrows seem to have been worthwhile. It is alluring to just consider the good things in life while considering what life means. The dangers of pleasure & the advantages of suffering must both be studied, according to Wong (**2007; Wong, 2009**), to fully understand psychology of well-being.

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Following are the aspects of psychological well-being:

- I. **Life Satisfaction:** Life satisfaction is more than just a measurement of one's current degree of happiness; rather, it is an appraisal of one's overall sentiments and attitudes towards one's life. It is a crucial component of subjective well-being and is affected by a variety of components, such as societal, psychological, and individual influences. "cognitive & affective estimations of his/her life" has been used to describe life.
- II. **Efficiency:** Efficiency in terms of psychological wellbeing may be seen as the best distribution and use of mental and emotional resources to support total thriving. To obtain desired results and preserve a state of good mental health, it entails skilfully controlling one's cognitive, emotional, and behavioural processes. A measurement of a company's, team's, or a worker's capacity to provide the greatest amount of output with minimal amount of time, labour, & other resources. Efficiency improves when the time, effort, & other inputs required to generate a given amount of output decrease (APA, 2016).
- III. **Sociability:** The term "sociability" describes a person's propensity and capacity for social contact, the development of relationships, and successful interpersonal communication. It is essential to social-emotional learning, individual growth, and general mental wellness. Sociability includes the capability to form and sustain strong bonds with people as well as interpersonal skills, communication prowess, empathy, and cooperative behaviour.
- IV. **Mental Health:** A person's entire level of psychological well-being, satisfaction, and happiness are all influenced by their mental health. It includes characteristics of well-being that are social, psychological, and emotional (Plumptre, 2023). Mental health encompasses more than the absence of mental diseases. It includes a condition of mental health that helps people to manage the demands of daily life, realise their potential, learn efficiently, and give back to their communities. A variety of individual, societal, and structural elements, including emotional intelligence, genetics, social and economic considerations, and environmental factors, all have an impact on it. A person's complete well-being depends on maintaining excellent mental health, which also affects decision-making, interpersonal connections, and socioeconomic and personal growth. Prioritising mental health, getting the right help when you need it, and using tactics to advance psychological well-being are crucial (WHO, Mental Health, 2022).
- V. **Interpersonal Relationships:** A key factor in psychological health is relationships with others. These links or affiliations are social ties that exist between two or more people, and they can include romantic partnerships, family ties, close friendships, acquaintanceships, and professional relationships. It has been demonstrated via research that communal motivation, which entails concern for the wellbeing of others, is associated with improved relationship satisfaction and personal well-being. Higher levels of both personal and relational well-being are correlated with general and partner-specific community motivation, however unrestrained communal motivation (devoid of agency and self-oriented care) is not. These results underline the need of achieving a balance between self-centred concern and concern for others to preserve interpersonal connections and general wellbeing (Bonnie M. Le et al., 2018).

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Self-Esteem and Psychological Well-being:

For this research, the researcher has considered the psychological variables - self-esteem and psychological well-being among breast cancer patients. Health care providers are so concerned with the quality of life of female survivors, including the physical, emotional, psychological, & social factors connected to trauma & adaptation to breast cancer (**Morales-Sánchez et al., 2021**).

A person's mental health may suffer severely because of breast cancer diagnosis and treatment. It frequently results in anxiety, fear, melancholy, and emotional suffering (**Tsai et al., 2021**). Breast cancer can impair a person's sense of self-worth and body image since it is a difficult and life-altering experience. Patients may be better able to manage the emotional and psychological difficulties brought on by their diagnosis and therapy if they have higher self-esteem, which may improve coping skills and foster resilience. The adherence to therapy and general quality of life of a patient might be affected by their psychological well-being. Patients who have higher self-esteem may be more driven to adhere to treatment plans, practise self-care, and seek assistance when required. They could also adjust to the changes brought on by breast cancer more easily and have a higher level of overall life satisfaction. A person's capacity to request and accept social assistance might be influenced by self-esteem. Breast cancer patients who have better self-esteem may be more inclined to ask for assistance, develop and maintain supportive connections, and communicate with loved ones in a positive way. It is commonly established that having strong social support networks is crucial for psychological well-being during trying times.

Healthcare providers may create targeted treatments, support plans, and psychological therapies to improve the quality of life and mental health outcomes for breast cancer patients by looking at the relationship between self-esteem and psychological well-being in these patients. Understanding how psychological health and self-esteem are related can help with the holistic treatment of breast cancer patients by addressing their emotional needs and fostering better mental health outcomes all along the way (**Niveau et al., 2021; Yektatab & Ghanbari, 2020**).

Thus, the present study will focus on the inherent mechanism of how self-esteem can have substantial impact on the psychological well-being of breast cancer patients.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Nicholas, et al. (1999), in their study discovered a link between spiritual wellbeing, psychological wellbeing, and religious commitment. Higher degrees of spiritual and PWB are frequently found in those who are more religiously committed. The authors contend that having a strong religious commitment helps both safeguard one's mental health and advance general wellbeing. The authors also point out that there is a complicated link between these characteristics and that it may change based on personal ideas and experiences.

In the study by **MPsychol & Celikoglu (2007)**, social support's impact on post-mastectomy breast cancer patients' psychological wellbeing was examined. The study discovered that supportive communication with the spouse, the spouse's favourable attitude to the mastectomy, marital satisfaction, and an open discussion of cancer-related feelings were all positively connected with PWB. But there was no connection between sadness or anxiety and instrumental help from a spouse or close companion. According to the study, depression and trait anxiety were linked to the spouse's unfavourable reaction to the mastectomy.

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Wojtyna et al., (2007): According to their study, cognitive-behavioural treatment (CBT) can raise women with BC's self-esteem and quality of life. 67 women who had received radiation and/or chemotherapy in addition to a mastectomy participated in the research. CBT was given to the experimental group whereas it was not given to the control group. The study discovered that, in comparison to the control group, the CBT group shown improvement in overall quality of life, general health status evaluation, and self-esteem. Additionally, there was less somatic symptom aggravation in the CBT group. However, psychotherapy had no effect on the investigated groups' levels of social functioning or assessments of their shared characteristics in this regard.

Veiga et al., (2010): The purpose of the study was to evaluate how oncoplastic surgery affected breast cancer patients receiving breast-conserving therapy in terms of quality of life and self-esteem. According to the study, women receiving breast-conserving therapy said that oncoplastic surgery improved their quality of life and sense of self. When it came to physical functioning, health perception, vitality, social functioning, role emotions, mental health, and self-esteem, the breast reconstruction group considerably outperformed the control group in terms of health status. According to the study's findings, oncoplastic surgery can enhance the quality of life and self-esteem of breast cancer patients receiving breast-conserving therapy.

Kovačič & Kovačič, (2011): According to the study's findings, relaxation exercises based on the Yoga in Daily Life method may be a helpful therapeutic physiotherapy intervention for patients with breast cancer who are also struggling with poor self-esteem. In every measurement of self-esteem levels during the trial, the study discovered statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups. The efficiency of this type of relaxation training in clinical oncology must be further investigated, though.

Landry et al., (2018): A modified physical exercise programme had a favourable effect on the self-esteem and quality of life of breast cancer patients who had undergone mastectomy, according to the study. The experimental group saw improvements in self-esteem, physical self-perception, quality of life, overall health status, pain, and breast symptoms after engaging in adaptive physical exercise for 12 weeks. The control group, which was excluded from the programme, did not exhibit any appreciable advancements.

Haji-Seyed-Sadeghi et al., (2020): The study's findings demonstrated that women with breast cancer who participated in mindfulness training saw substantial improvements in their psychological health, coping mechanisms, and family functioning. To effectively manage the psychological concerns of patients with breast cancer, mindfulness training may be used in psychotherapy offices and medical facilities.

Anderson et al., (2020): Their study provides a review of the literature on the wellbeing and quality of life of breast cancer patients. It summarises the key discoveries from publications published in the past and present that have helped to advance the treatment of breast cancer patients. The study tries to give a contemporary viewpoint on the subject and emphasises the detrimental effects of breast cancer and treatment options on patients' quality of life. However, the publication makes no mention of any specific findings or conclusions from its own research.

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Objectives

The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

- Assessment of the level of self-esteem in breast cancer survivors.
- Assessment of the level of psychological well-being of breast cancer survivors.
- To explore the correlation between self-esteem and psychological well-being of breast cancer survivors.

The hypothesis for this paper is:

H₁ - There is a significant relationship between self-esteem and psychological well-being of breast cancer survivors.

METHODOLOGY

The present study deals with two different psychological aspects, namely, self-esteem and psychological well-being. The data is gathered from individuals with the survivorship of breast cancer from a particular hospital in Raipur, Chhattisgarh. The variables prominent in this study are:

Independent Variable: Self-esteem

Dependent Variable: Psychological well-being

Data collection is primarily done from the patients. The study has correlational design, with self-esteem as the independent variable and psychological well-being as the dependent variable.

Sampling Method: The sampling technique used for this study is convenience sampling. The researcher decided to collect samples from 35 female breast cancer survivors in Ramkrishna CARE Hospitals.

Tools used:

Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWBS-SDCP) by Sisodia & Chaudhary: This test is used to assess the psychological well-being of the targeted subjects. It has 50 items with 5 responses- strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree. Its reliability is 0.87 and validity is 0.94. The range of obtainable scores is 101-200 for the entire scale and 10-50 for each dimension.

Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale by Morris Rosenberg (1965): Used to measure the self-esteem level of subjects. It consists of 10 items with 4 responses- strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. 5 out of 10 items have negative polarity and the rest are of positive polarity. The test-retest reliability was found to be 0.88 and the validity is considerably high.

After considering availability of the desired population, a total number of 35 patients were finalized for data analysis, which suggests:

N = 35

The sample of 35 female breast cancer survivors were taken to collect data from. These patients were admitted in the oncology wing of Ramkrishna CARE Hospital in Raipur, Chhattisgarh.

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Procedure

The researcher gathered samples in offline mode only. Data was collected from female breast cancer patients admitted in the oncology wing at Ramkrishna CARE Hospital. The researcher visited the hospital and gave a brief overview of the research endeavour and its objectives. Sheets were being filled by the help of the researcher and responses were collected from interested participants. The researcher created a general connection with the participants to make them feel at ease. Participant were given the opportunity to review the consent form and provide demographic information before receiving instructions for both measures. After the entire interview, the subjects were acknowledged. Data collection took about 3 months.

Statistical Analysis: Pearson Product Moment correlation was determined between the variables given above using SPSS & MS Excel as the study is fundamentally a correlational design.

RESULT AND DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis aims at organizing and summarizing the gathered data for its comprehension to answer research-based questions.

Following statistical methods are used in this research for data analysis:

- Descriptive: Mean and Standard Deviation
- Correlational: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (r) value analysis

Descriptive Analysis

A descriptive analysis was conducted on a sample of breast cancer patients to examine the self-esteem and psychological well-being among this population. Table 1 presents the descriptive analysis results for self-esteem, based on a dataset comprising 35 observations. The mean self-esteem score was found to be 31.77142857, with a standard deviation of 4.284621709. Similarly, Table 2 displays the descriptive analysis findings for psychological well-being, using the same dataset of 35 observations. The mean score for psychological well-being was calculated to be 185.8285714, accompanied by a standard deviation of 13.1741407 (see Table 1 and Table 2 for details).

Table 1: Descriptive Analysis of self-esteem of breast cancer patients

S.NO.	Particulars	Values
1	Total Observations (N)	35
2	Mean	31.77142857
3	S.D	4.284621709

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis of psychological well-being of breast cancer patients

S. No.	Particulars	Values
1	Total Observations (N)	35
2	Mean	185.8285714
3	S.D.	13.1741407

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Correlational Analysis:

Table 3: Correlational Analysis of self-esteem and psychological well-being

	<i>SE</i>	<i>PWB</i>
SE	1	
PWB	0.708967**	1

** The correlation is significant at 0.01

The P-Value is $< .00001$. The result is significant at $p < .01$.

H₁ - There is a significant relationship between self-esteem and psychological well-being of breast cancer survivors.

The correlational analysis (Table 3) explored the relationship between self-esteem (SE) and psychological well-being (PWB). The correlation coefficient between SE and PWB was found to be 0.708967**, indicating a positive and moderately strong correlation between the two variables. The asterisks denote statistical significance, with ** indicating significance at the 0.01 level. The p-value was calculated to be less than .00001, further supporting the statistical significance of the correlation at a p-value of less than .01. These findings suggest that there is a significant positive association between self-esteem and psychological well-being among the examined breast cancer patients, highlighting the importance of considering both factors in understanding and promoting overall well-being in this population.

DISCUSSION

Based on the correlational analysis findings, there is a significant positive correlation between self-esteem (SE) and psychological well-being (PWB) among breast cancer patients ($r = 0.708967^{**}$, $p < .00001$). These results suggest that higher levels of self-esteem are associated with greater psychological well-being in this population. This finding is consistent with the literature, which highlights the importance of considering self-esteem and its impact on the quality of life and psychological health of breast cancer patients. **Veiga et al. (2010)** found that oncoplastic surgery, a type of breast-conserving therapy, improved the quality of life and self-esteem of patients. The study emphasized the positive impact of oncoplastic surgery on various aspects of health status and self-esteem. Similarly, **Kovačič & Kovačič (2011)** suggested that relaxation exercises, specifically based on the Yoga in Daily Life method, can be beneficial in improving self-esteem among breast cancer patients. Additionally, **Landry et al. (2018)** conducted a study that demonstrated the positive effects of a modified physical exercise program on self-esteem and quality of life in breast cancer patients who had undergone mastectomy. The experimental group participating in the exercise program showed significant improvements in self-esteem, physical self-perception, and overall health status compared to the control group. Furthermore, **Haji-Seyed-Sadeghi et al. (2020)** highlighted the potential benefits of mindfulness training in enhancing psychological health, coping mechanisms, and family functioning among breast cancer patients. Mindfulness training was shown to be an effective approach in addressing the psychological concerns of patients.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the relationship between self-esteem and psychological well-being among breast cancer survivors. The findings revealed a significant positive correlation ($r = 0.708967$, $p < 0.01$) between self-esteem and psychological well-being, indicating that higher levels of self-esteem were associated with better psychological well-being. The study

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highlights the importance of addressing self-esteem levels in breast cancer patients to promote their overall psychological well-being. The study's findings contribute to the field of psycho-oncology by highlighting the importance of self-esteem in relation to the psychological well-being of breast cancer survivors. This study fills a gap in the existing literature, as there are limited studies exploring this specific relationship. However, limitations include a small sample size and reliance on self-report measures. Further research is needed with larger samples to deepen our understanding and develop interventions targeting self-esteem to enhance the psychological well-being of breast cancer patients.

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Conflict of Interest

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