

The Effect of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy–Based Psychoeducation on Body Image, Quality of Sexual Life, and Dyadic Adjustment of Women After Breast Cancer Surgery

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OBJECTIVES: To determine the effect of acceptance and commitment therapy–based psychoeducation applied to women who have undergone breast cancer surgery on body image, quality of sexual life, and dyadic adjustment.

SAMPLE & SETTING: Women who have undergone breast cancer surgery were included. The research had a single-group quasi-experimental design with pre-/post-test measurements and 31 participants.

METHODS & VARIABLES: The research was carried out between February and July 2021. Data were collected using a personal information form, a body image perception scale, the Dyadic Adjustment Scale, and the Sexual Quality of Life–Female.

RESULTS: The post-test mean scores of body image, quality of sexual life, and dyadic adjustment scales were significantly higher than pretest ($p < 0.05$).

IMPLICATIONS FOR NURSING: To improve the body image, quality of sexual life, and dyadic adjustment of women who have undergone breast cancer surgery, nurses are recommended to include psychoeducation based on acceptance and commitment therapy interventions in the nursing care process and to evaluate the effectiveness.

KEYWORDS acceptance and commitment therapy; breast cancer surgery; body image; dyadic adjustment

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Breast cancer is the most prevalent type of cancer globally (World Health Organization, 2022). In the United States, about 287,500 new cases of breast cancer were detected in 2022, resulting in the death of 43,550 women (National Breast Cancer Foundation, 2023). Similarly, cancer diseases are the second leading cause of death in Turkey, and breast cancer is the most prevalent type of cancer in women (Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Health, 2020). The methods used in the treatment of breast cancer are chemotherapy, radiation therapy, adjuvant therapy, hormone therapy, biologic agents, and surgical treatment (Göktaş, 2021). Studies show that women experience many problems after breast cancer surgery and difficulties particularly arising from psychosocial problems (Christophe et al., 2016; Rottmann et al., 2015). Psychotherapy interventions are frequently used to overcome the difficulties experienced with these psychosocial problems (LeRoy et al., 2018; Nikbakhsh et al., 2018).

Acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) is a therapy model characterized as the third wave of cognitive behavioral therapies, proven to be effective on the psychological reflections of physical disorders such as cancer, as well as psychiatric disorders (Enoch & Nicholson, 2020; Fernández-Rodríguez et al., 2021; Mohabbat-Bahar et al., 2015). It has been reported that ACT can be an effective psychotherapeutic intervention for use in oncology; reduce various symptoms, such as psychological suffering, mood disorders, trauma, and physical pain; and increase quality of life and psychological flexibility (Fashler et al., 2018). For this reason, it is thought that ACT may also be