

**DISABILITY, PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS AND QUALITY OF LIFE  
IN BREAST CANCER SURVIVORS WITH ARM LYMPHEDEMA****A. Pyszel, K. Malyszczak, K. Pyszel, R. Andrzejak, A. Szuba**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The aim of this study was to assess disability, psychological distress and quality of life in Polish breast cancer survivors with arm lymphedema. One thousand sets of questionnaires consisting of WHO-DAS II, GHQ-30, EORTC QLQ-C30 and QLQ-BR23 were sent to members of the Polish Federation of Breast Cancer Survivors Clubs "Amazonki." The response rate was 28.3% of whom 31.70% reported arm lymphedema. The WHO-DAS II survey showed that patients with arm lymphedema had a higher overall disability score (45.04 versus 38.80 in group without arm lymphedema;  $p=0.01$ ) and higher mean values in the scales of understanding and communicating, getting around, life activities at home, getting along with people, participating in society. The EORTC QLQ-C30 survey showed that patients with lymphedema had lower mean values in physical (0.55 versus 0.65;  $p=0.001$ ), emotional (0.47 versus 0.57;  $p=0.01$ ), social (0.59 versus 0.73;  $p=0.002$ ), cognitive and role functioning, increased fatigue, pain, insomnia, dyspnea, nausea/vomiting and financial problems. The EORTC QLQ-BR23 data demonstrated worse future perspectives and an increase in breast and arm symptoms, and the GHQ-30 survey produced higher psychological distress (scores 15.18 versus 11.24;  $p=0.004$ ).*

*In conclusion, breast cancer survivors with arm lymphedema were more disabled, experienced a poorer quality of life and had increased psychological distress in comparison to survivors without this condition.*