

Surviving Breast Cancer Can Be Sexy!

Women's Sexual Concerns During and After Breast Cancer Treatment

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Behavioral Sciences**

**Memorial Sloan Kettering
Cancer Center**



Our study aim was to analyze the sexual concerns expressed by women during and after breast cancer (BC) treatment an online discussion board

Female Sexual Changes after Treatment
Vasomotor symptoms <i>(hot flashes, flushing, night sweats)</i>
Vaginal dryness/atrophy
Decreased libido
Dyspareunia <i>(painful intercourse)</i>
Arousal difficulties
Difficulty with orgasms
Stenosis <i>(narrowing of the cervix)</i>

BC survivorship and sexual concerns

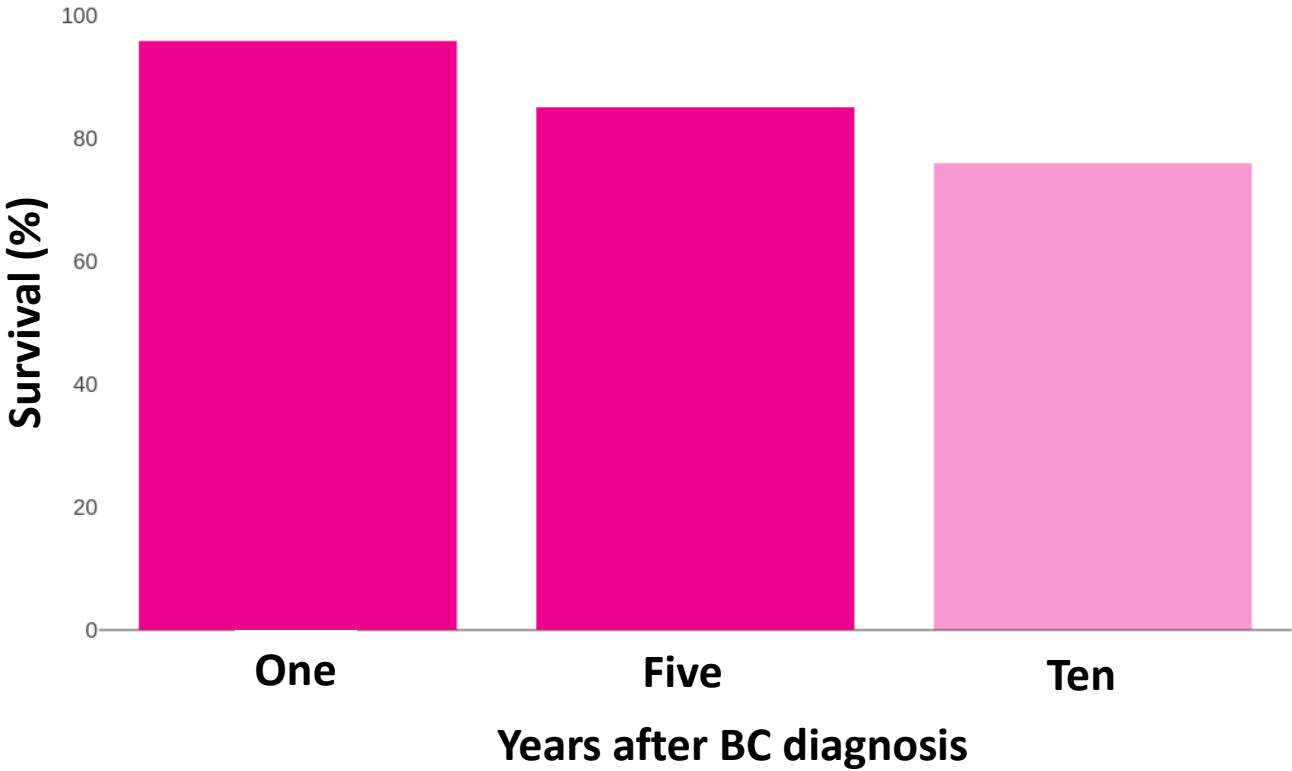


ACS content analysis



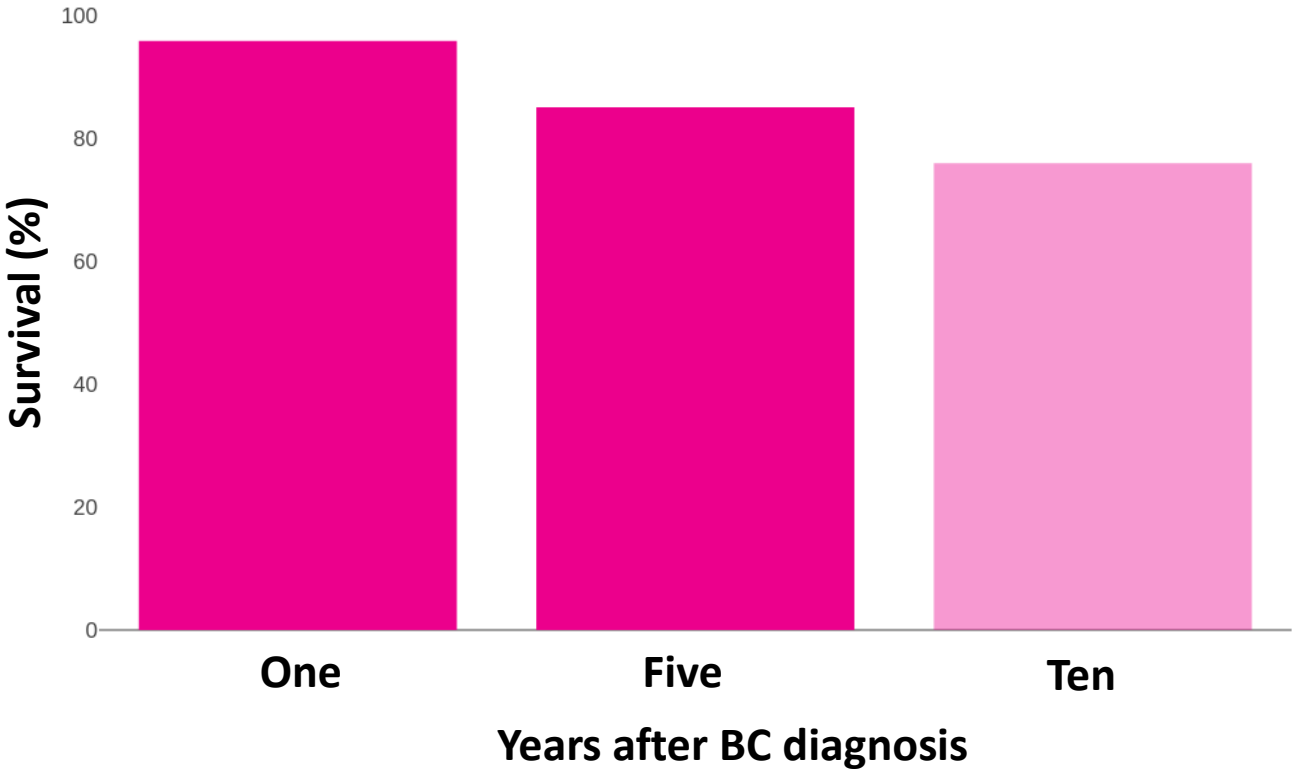
Recommendations: Intervention

Sexual health is a breast cancer survivorship issue



International Committee of the American Foundation for Urological Disease.
Based on a graphic created by Cancer Research UK.

Sexual health is a breast cancer survivorship issue



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Sexual concerns are not often brought up with healthcare providers (HCPs), but are discussed in detail on online forums

Resources

Member Resource library

CSN Chatroom

cancer.org

Cancer Information

Community Resources

Support Programs

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Donate Now

Relay For Life

Making Strides Against Breast Cancer

ACS News

Caregivers

After Treatment

In Treatment

Rides To Treatment

Lodging

Hair Loss and Mastectomy Products

Breast Cancer Support

Search by Keyword

sex

Search

Breast Cancer forum posts

Title	Author	Replies	Last Reply	Name
Tamoxifen, hot flashes, & sex	kacilee	13	Mon, 08/03/2015 - 3:00am	Breast Cancer
Hello to the Group!	just_themom	12	Sat, 01/27/2001 - 8:46pm	Breast Cancer
One Month After Diagnosis & Feeling Overwhelmed	webaur	9	Tue, 02/20/2001 - 3:50pm	Breast Cancer
You Have to Laugh.....or you'll cry!	deecaf1	13	Sat, 03/03/2001 - 2:27pm	Breast Cancer
Maintaining sexual intimacy during chemo	mish	1	Thu, 06/07/2001 - 6:13pm	Breast Cancer
"I'm Alive and the Doctor's Dead"	bdean	2	Tue, 08/14/2001 - 8:16pm	Breast Cancer
chemo affects thyroid	bdean	1	Mon, 09/10/2001 - 2:45pm	Breast Cancer
cancer at early age	wmiller	2	Tue, 03/26/2002 - 5:39pm	Breast Cancer
I HAVE AA HUSBAND AND I AM AA MYSELF	martinbikermom	0	Fri, 04/05/2002 - 2:11pm	Breast Cancer
enough is enough	kelli63	2	Mon, 06/10/2002 - 6:16pm	Breast Cancer
Very long tale of one week out of TramFlap	martyzl	0	Tue, 07/30/2002 - 5:21pm	Breast Cancer
estring	wgbgb	1	Sat, 08/10/2002 - 9:15pm	Breast Cancer
reconstruction improvements?	Becky20	4	Mon, 12/09/2002 - 11:06pm	Breast Cancer
Re: gdpawel	hummingbyrd	9	Wed, 02/05/2003 - 8:48pm	Breast Cancer
Hep B	klippe	2	Sat, 05/03/2003 - 1:10pm	Breast Cancer
Intimacy	jake10	4	Wed, 05/07/2003 - 12:55pm	Breast Cancer
we could use your help	juliasarah	5	Wed, 07/02/2003 - 1:25pm	Breast Cancer
Finding the creativity	smvargo	11	Wed, 07/09/2003 - 11:33pm	Breast Cancer
ovarian ablation or drugs?	smvargo	11	Fri, 07/18/2003 - 10:27pm	Breast Cancer
Problems with Emotions and Sex	boobless66	7	Mon, 08/18/2003 - 9:13pm	Breast Cancer

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 next > last »

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Specify Search

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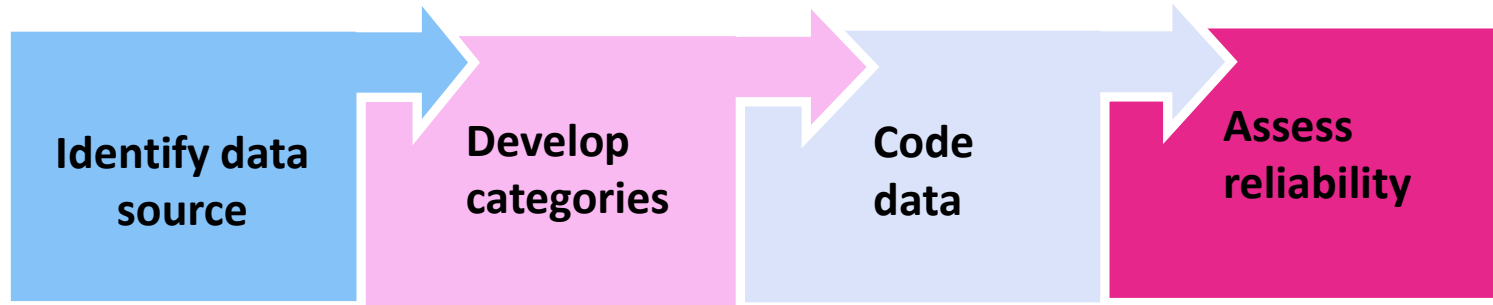
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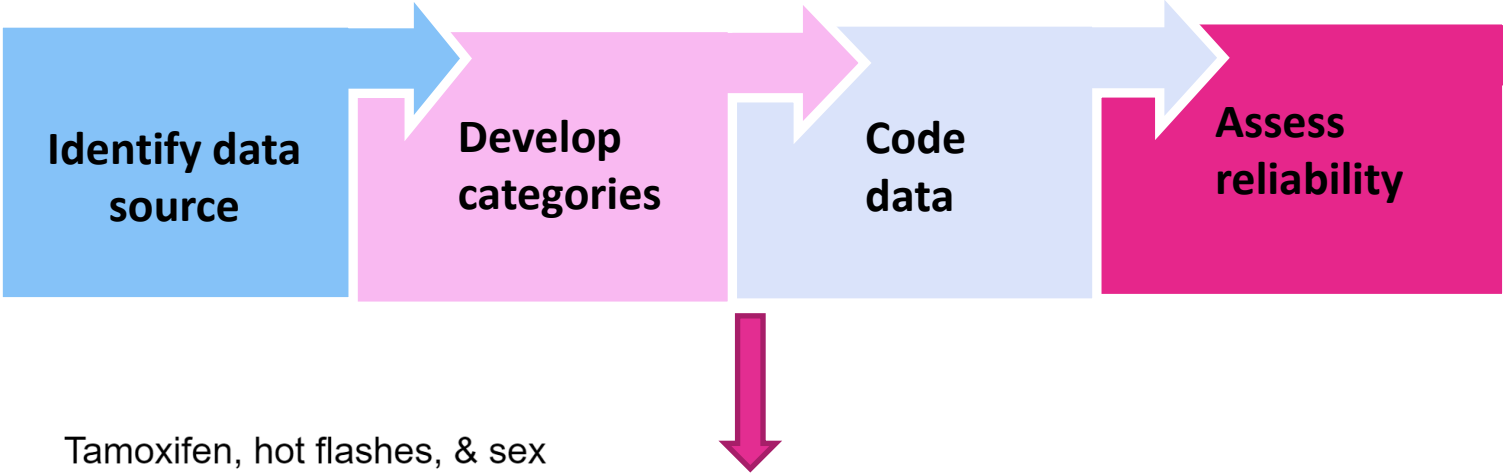
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Over 10 pages of posts/replies

A content analysis was conducted to qualify common themes/patterns in the sexual concerns expressed by women during and after BC treatment



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**American Cancer Society®**

kacilee

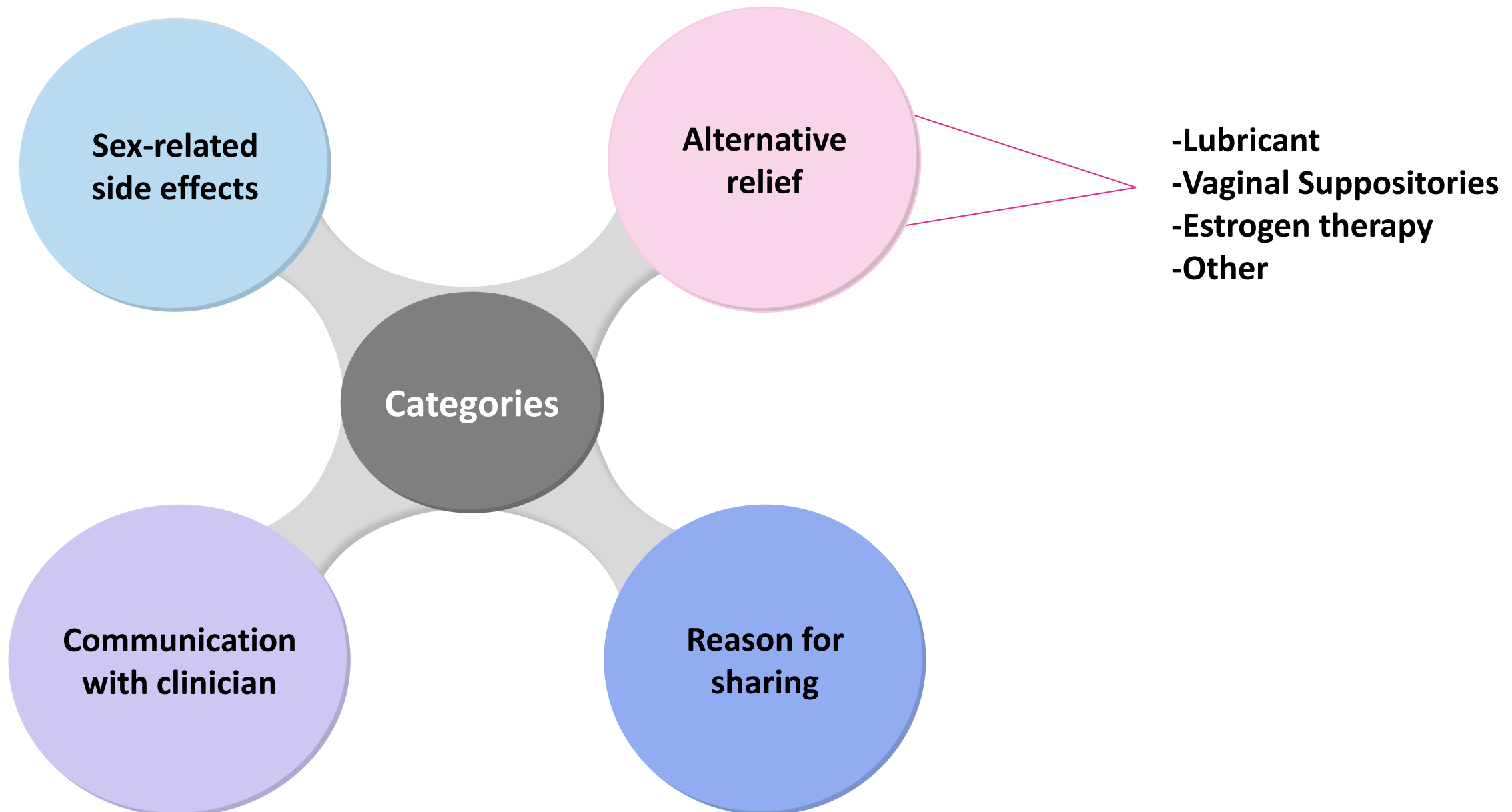
Posts: 2

Joined: Oct 2000

I was diagnosed with breast cancer last July and had surgery to remove the lump, have been treated with radiation therapy and am now taking Tamoxifen twice a day. Since my cancer was estrogen positive, I was immediately taken off estrogen which was helping me with hot flashes. Since I have been on the Tamoxifen, I have been experiencing hot flashes, but they do seem to occur less and less every day. I still experience them in bed at night and I feel the need to throw the covers across the room as far away as I can. I also have been totally turned off by sex. My sexual desire has completely disappeared, and the dryness that occurs when my husband attempts penetration just makes it no fun. I cannot reach an orgasm even by manual means. I just feel like it's hopeless even trying. My doctor tells me that I will get back to somewhat "normal" in about a year or so, and hopefully I will. But right now, I miss the feeling of "connection" with my husband and the closeness that comes with an intimate relationship. If there is anyone else out there going through the same thing or experiencing these same symptoms, please write. It would help to know that this is normal and it will get better someday.

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We observed four main coding categories to understand the emerging themes surrounding sexual concerns in the forum



Side effects/sexual concerns most often expressed by women included decreased libido, body image issues, hot flashes, and painful sex

98%



**Described
reason for
sharing**

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**Described
side effects/
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14%



**Described
alternative
Relief**

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reason for
sharing**

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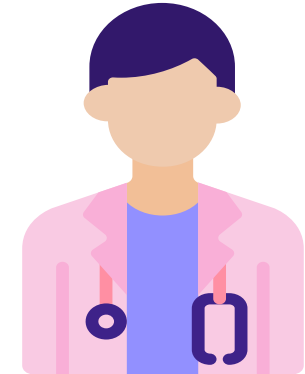
**Described
side effects/
sexual concerns**

14%



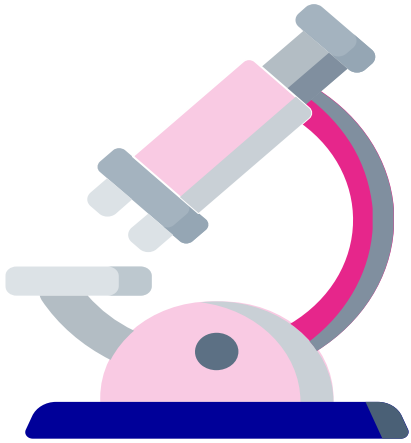
**Described
alternative
Relief**

13%



**Described
communication
with clinician**

There are three areas of concern HCPs can work on to improve communication about sexual concerns with women during and after BC treatment



Knowledge



Assumptions



Intervention

The MSK Communication Skills (Comskil) Program developed a training to help cancer HCP's communicate with women patients about sexual concerns



"Sexual Health Communication Skills Training to Elicit And Discuss Female Cancer Patients' Sexual Concerns"

Women during and after BC have sexual concerns not addressed by HCPs that they express online; their voice needs to be amplified in healthcare settings

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Stenosis (*narrowing of the cervix*)

Oncology HCPs should inquire about and address sexual concerns to enhance quality of survivorship



We recommend trainings to help HCPs create a safe space for these conversations



you
matter.



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Acknowledgments:
Dr. Laura Liberman
Dr. Smita Banerjee
Rachel Lee-Carey
Melissa Marshall
Leticia Mercado
SCORE 2020 cohort

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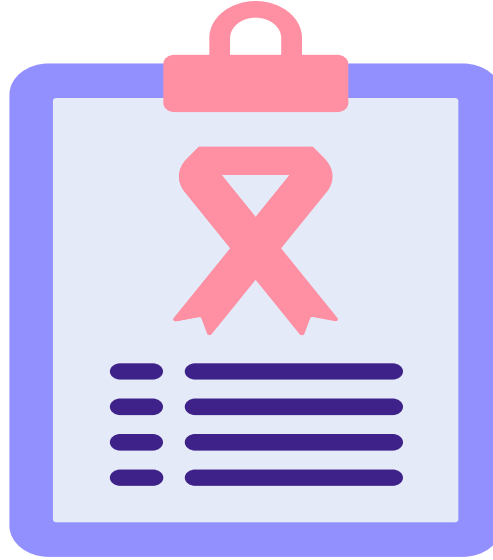


Questions?

Extra Slides



Learn key concerns



**Offer training in
communication
skills**



Increase awareness



**Memorial Sloan Kettering
Cancer Center**