









## Review Article

## Adjuvant Hormonal Therapy and Emotional Freedom Techniques to Improve the Quality of Life of Patients with Breast Cancer: A Review of the Literature

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### Abstract

Health-related quality of life (QOL) has been a major concern for both breast cancer survivors and patients seeking treatment. Studies were done to address this issue; however, not much is known about the benefits of the Adjuvant Hormonal Therapy-Emotional Freedom Technique (AH-EFT). The study's objective is to evaluate the therapy's efficacy in breast cancer patients. The Adjuvant Hormonal Treatment-Emotional Freedom Method was examined in the current study using a review of the literature (AH-EFT). The finding indicates that integrating this therapy with conventional treatment improves the patient's quality of life during these times. Nurses working in the cancer ward are advised to use this therapy for clinical improvement. Future studies are required to evaluate the intervention with different populations and dosages or durations.

**Keywords:** Adjuvant hormonal therapy, Breast cancer, Clinical improvement, Emotional freedom technique, Quality of life.

العلاج الهرموني المساعد وتقنية الحرية العاطفية لتحسين نوعية حياة مرضى سرطان الثدي: مراجعة الأدبيات

الخلاصة

كانت جودة الحياة المتعلقة بالصحة مصدر قلق كبير لكل من الناجين من سرطان الثدي والمرضى الذين يبحثون عن العلاج. وقد أجريت دراسات لمعالجة هذه المسألة؛ ومع ذلك، لا يعرف الكثير عن فوائد العلاج الهرموني المساعد-تقنية الحرية العاطفية. هدف الدراسة هو تقييم فعالية العلاج الهرموني المساعد-تقنية الحرية العاطفية في مرضى سرطان الثدي. تم فحص طريقة العلاج الهرموني المساعد - الحرية العاطفية في الدراسة الحالية باستخدام مراجعة الأدبيات. تشير النتيجة إلى أن دمج هذا العلاج مع العلاج التقليدي يحسن نوعية حياة المريض خلال هذه الأوقات. ينصح الممرضات العاملات في جناح السرطان باستخدام هذا العلاج لتحسين السريري. الدراسات المستقبلية مطلوبة لتقييم التدخل مع مجموعات سكانية مختلفة وجرعات أو مدد زمنية مختلفة.

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### INTRODUCTION

With a good survival rate, breast cancer is the second most frequent form of cancer among women today [1]. Long-term psychological and physical manifestations of the disease's chronicity have a negative impact on the patient's quality of life [2]. While breast cancer usually affects individuals 50 years of age or older in

the US and Europe, its incidence is highest in people under the age of 40. Breast cancer incidence in 2018 was 24.2% [3]. As clinical interventions in the area improved, more people were surviving breast cancer [4]. This improvement was mostly shown in nations with high screening coverage that promotes early diagnosis. For instance, when a disease is subclinical, it is advised that the patient be evaluated for tumor molecular characterization before receiving novel

systemic regular therapies [5]. A longer duration of time lived as a breast cancer survivor is associated with earlier detection of the disease [6]. Because of this, research has focused on issues with patients' quality of life (QoL) who have breast cancer [7,8]. The change from active patient to survivor is crucial for improving quality of life and allowing people to continue their previous lives. Numerous scholarly works have been published regarding the advancement of research focused on complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) as a means of enhancing the quality of life (QoL) for individuals diagnosed with breast cancer. As an example, complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) therapy, which is a modern and relatively safe form of treatment, was found to be correlated with an increased level of general global quality of life (QoL) [9]. CAM therapies may help reduce the distress of symptoms (e.g., QoL) and side effects linked with breast cancer treatment [10]. Various forms of physical activity, such as aerobic exercise, resistance training, tai chi, and a combination of aerobic and resistance exercise, have been found to provide clinical advantages in terms of enhancing patients' quality of life [11]. The implementation of yoga therapies has the potential to improve the overall quality of life for individuals who have been diagnosed with breast cancer [12]. Combining herbal remedies, mind-body practices, and nutritional supplements consistently enhances the patient's quality of life [13]. Although conventional treatments for breast cancer, including chemotherapy, surgery, radiotherapy, and hormone therapy, provide advantages, they are also accompanied by negative consequences, such as nausea, pain, fatigue, anxiety, depression, and the possibility of secondary tumors [14]. Relevance studies have underscored the importance of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) in the treatment of individuals with breast cancer, owing to its beneficial outcomes and low risk profile. However, it seems the integration of adjuvant hormonal therapy and the emotional freedom technique (AH-EFT) is less explored. Adjuvant hormonal therapy uses hormones to slow or stop the growth of cancer [15]. In the meantime, the Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) is a technique that helps cancer patients regulate their emotions, unsettling thoughts, and worry [16]. Therefore, the review aims to assess these therapies and evaluate the gaps for future studies. It is expected that the results of this review can be useful for clinical oncology nurses working in hospitals or cancer centers.

## METHODS

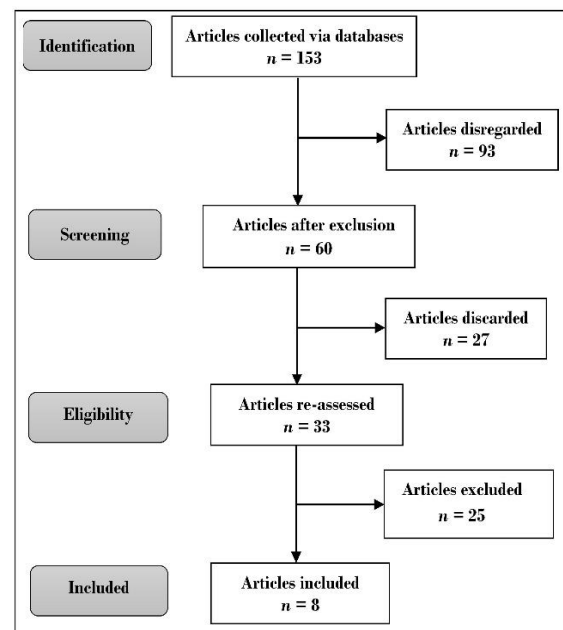
Following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) guidelines helped to guide the selection of studies for the literature review. Several online databases were involved, as follows: PubMed, ScienceDirect, EBSCO, Springer, Google, and Google Scholar. The search criteria involved articles in English and Bahasa

discussing adjuvant hormonal therapy and the emotional freedom technique; primary review studies; publications from 2000 through 2022; along with a detailed study design. The aforementioned phrases were utilized as keywords in the study. The phrases include 'adjuvant hormonal therapy breast cancer quality of life', 'emotional freedom technique breast cancer quality of life', 'quality of life breast cancer treatment', 'hormonal therapy breast cancer', 'complementary therapy quality of life breast cancer', and 'emotional freedom technique breast cancer'.

## RESULTS

### Search Result

A data process analysis utilizing a PRISMA flow diagram was performed on a total of 153 articles (Figure 1). According to the article's details, the studies' data that were chosen for assessment were the title, journal, and year of publication, as well as research details.



**Figure 1:** Article selecting process.

The search method concentrated on taking the criteria into account to reduce duplication. The researcher used the following four phases to carry out a screening process: First, relevant titles and abstracts were identified using an automated search for the study's key goal. Emotional Freedom Method and Adjuvant Hormonal Treatment Studies were compiled ( $n = 153$ ). Many articles from the first round were eliminated owing to duplication, lack of relevance to the subject, inadequate discussion of adjuvant hormonal therapy and emotional freedom technique, editorials, and book chapters ( $n = 93$ ). Second, after screening the remaining articles ( $n = 60$ ), which numbered 27, titles and abstracts were considered before the articles were ignored. Finally, after screening the complete text for criteria ( $n = 33$ ),

articles that didn't satisfy the requirements were eliminated ( $n = 25$ ). Fourth, comparison and analysis were performed on 8 publications comparing and contrasting adjuvant hormonal treatment and the emotional freedom method (Table 1).

### *Characteristics of the selected studies*

Eight studies were identified in total. The collected articles investigated breast cancer patients through diverse research methodologies, including three studies utilizing systematic reviews, three studies employing observational studies, one study utilizing qualitative research, and one study utilizing quasi-experimental research. There was 1 study that used comparison therapy and 7 studies that did not use it.

**Table 1:** Study finding

Author and Publication year	Participants	Method	Comparison therapy (If any)	Outcomes
Costantino, 2002 [22]	Patients with breast cancer	Review	None	Hormone therapy improves QoL
Berkowitz <i>et al.</i> , 2021 [17]	Patients with breast cancer	Observational study	None	Endocrine therapy improves QoL
Kilickap <i>et al.</i> , 2013 [18]	Patients with breast cancer	Observational study	None	Endocrine therapy QoL
Peddie <i>et al.</i> , 2021 [23]	Patients with breast cancer	Review	None	Hormone therapy improves QoL
Adamowicz & Waliszewska, 2020 [19]	Patients with breast cancer	Qualitative study	None	Hormone therapy improves QoL
Col <i>et al.</i> , 2005 [24]	Patients with breast cancer	Review	None	Hormone therapy increases the risk of occurrence
Baker & Hoffman, 2015 [21]	Patients with breast cancer	Observational study	None	EFT improves mood state
Kalroozi <i>et al.</i> , 2022 [20]	Patients with breast cancer	Quasi experimental study	Usual care	EFT improves sleep quality and happiness

## **DISCUSSION**

Breast cancer patients often experience physical and mental side effects that have a detrimental impact on their quality of life. Quality of life encompasses various domains such as physical health, psychological well-being (including anxiety and depression), and social support. According to a report by the National Cancer Policy Board [25] of the Institute of Medicine and National Research Council in the United States, the staging of breast cancer involves multiple stages, such as diagnosis, treatment, genetic risk and psychological considerations, non-invasive breast cancer, cancer recurrence, treatment, resumption of normal life, survivorship, and palliative care. The experiences of patients during these phases may exhibit variability. Clinical interventions have been discussed in this review, covering a variety of behavioral, psychological, and environmental tactics. These strategies seek to wrap up the standard course of treatment for improving quality of life [26]. Hormone therapy for patients with breast cancer is often used after surgical treatment to reduce cancer recurrence. This therapy may also be utilized to shrink the tumor before surgery, making it more likely to be removed completely. Studies have highlighted the

The countries studied are Los Angeles [17], Turkey [18], Wejherowo and Gdansk [19], Tehran and Isfahan [20], London, and Leeds [21]. Another three studies are systematic reviews [22–24].

### *Themes*

Table 1 delineates the attributes of the scholarly articles included in this literature review. The literature was subjected to a thematic analysis, which revealed that all the myths examined could be classified into two primary themes: to investigate the influence of adjuvant hormonal therapy on the quality of life of patients, as well as the impact of the emotional freedom technique on the quality of life of patients.

benefits of hormone therapy as it will improve the QoL of patients [22,17]. Tamoxifen is a commonly utilized therapeutic intervention for individuals diagnosed with breast cancer. It is deemed a safe option for those experiencing menopause or those who are still menstruating [27]. Hormone treatment and trastuzumab medicines also enhance hospitalized patients' quality of life. Compared to women receiving chemotherapy, women receiving hormone therapy had an improved cognitive state and fewer severe systemic side effects [18,23,19]. Even though hormone therapy has benefits, a study found that this therapy may increase the risk of the occurrence of breast cancer [24,28]. Therefore, nurses should provide complete information to patients with breast cancer during hormone therapy implementation. Another therapy recommended is the emotional freedom technique (EFT). Since being introduced in 1999, EFT is a brief approach that combines a number of exposure techniques, somatic stimulation of the body's and face's acupressure points, and cognitive therapy [29]. Studies have shown that this treatment is clinically effective for patients with breast cancer. For instance, the utilization of the Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) has been found to be a viable self-help strategy for breast cancer patients who are

experiencing adverse effects from hormonal therapies [21]. EFT improves sleep quality and happiness for patients with breast cancer [20]. The implementation of this therapy is suggested for nurses to incorporate throughout the entirety of the breast cancer care process. However, the combination therapy of adjuvant hormonal therapy and the emotional freedom technique has never been evaluated in the study. This finding may help the researcher conduct a study on this potential topic.

## Conclusion

Patients with breast cancer are recommended to use CAM, including a combination of adjuvant hormonal therapy and emotional freedom techniques (AH-EFT). The oncology nurses need to have a discussion with patients related to the use of CAM and be up-to-date with the risks and benefits of these therapies. Patients' caregivers should be involved in the course of treatment. Clinical studies directing interventions to improve biomarkers of breast cancer should be initiated in the future.

## Conflict of interests

No conflict of interest was declared by the authors

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## Data sharing statement

N/A

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