

Breast Cancer

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The proposed research project is about breast cancer, a worldwide disease with increasing incidence (Manello, Tonti, Benedetti, Canestrari, Zhu et al., 2007), constituting the most frequent cause of malignancy in women all over the world (Al-Shaibani et al. 2006). It is more than ever the leading cause of death in women (Vandeloo, Bruckers & Janssens, 2007).

Published literature points to specific factors associated with the development of breast cancer in women. These factors include increased consumption of animal fat, lack of physical exercise, no history of breast feeding, menopause, hormonal replacement therapy and a family history of breast cancer. As the majority of cases have an environmental origin they can be prevented.

The parameters associated with the causation of breast cancer in women, have been extensively investigated with case control studies as well as cohort follow-ups, in many parts of the world. No epidemiological study has been found to document the variables involved in the causation of breast cancer among women in Cyprus.

The aim of this study is to investigate and describe the factors that lead to the development of breast cancer among women in Cyprus. The methodology will be based on the use of an epidemiological approach and a case control design, using two samples of subjects. The one sample will consist of 100 women with a diagnosis of breast cancer confirmed with a biopsy. The second sample, which will form the control group, will consist of 200 women with the same demographic characteristics as the first group, but without a breast cancer history. Data will be collected by using a questionnaire developed and standardized by the author herself. The analysis of data will be done by using the software statistical package SPSS.

My hypothesis is that there is a positive relationship between cancer of the breast among women and the independent variables in the study which include excessive consumption of animal fat in the diet, obesity, lack of exercise, nulliparous status, and hormonal replacement with the use of oestrogens and stress. On the contrary, breast feeding is expected to have a protective effect against breast cancer.

Based on the findings, recommendations will be made to the Ministry of Health, local authorities, women's organisations and other groups concerned with the welfare of women. These recommendations will include lifestyle changes, regular exercise and a diet rich in fruits, vegetables and olive oil, promotion of breast feeding and prevention of obesity in post-menopausal women, as they could play a role in primary prevention of breast cancer.

Life in moderation will be encouraged as a fundamental principle of an appropriate lifestyle and a token of health and longevity.

