

# Webinar on NURSING & HEALTHCARE

Nov 02, 2020 | Webinar

---

## **Sexual Health after Mastectomy: Experience of Arabic Women**

**Rawan Waleed Mahmoud, Kath Peters, Judy Mannix and Fiona McDermid**

Western Sydney University, Australia

**Purpose:** Breast cancer (BC) is the most common cancer among women in the world and often results in a mastectomy. Women who have had a mastectomy often suffer from altered body image, low self-esteem and alteration in sexuality. Sexuality is important in human life because it helps to boost the immune system, boosts longevity, reduces stress, decreases depression and increases the strength of relationships between partners. Breast cancer (BC) is a major public health threat among Arabic women. There is a lack of research that addresses the sexual health experiences of Arabic women who have had a mastectomy. This is likely related to the cultural and religious beliefs and social mores of Arabic society that consider discussion surrounding sexual health a prohibited topic.

**Aim:** This study aim to explore the sexual health experiences of Arab women who have had a mastectomy due to BC. Method: A qualitative approach underpinned by social constructivism, feminist perspectives and storytelling was deemed as most appropriate for this study as it enabled the researcher to explore how people understand and describe human phenomenon.

**Results:** 22 women were interviewed in this research study. Initial results show that the Arabic women who have had a mastectomy due to BC notice a decrease in their sexual desire after mastectomy, and experience challenges to communicate about sexual relationships with their partners. Overall, participants conveyed they lacked knowledge about their sexual health and well-being and that health professionals did not communicate potential issues of a sexual nature. This presentation is a case study that provides insights into the sexual health experiences of a 24-year-old Arabic woman who had been diagnosed with BC and had undergone a mastectomy. Her narrative highlights the multiple losses she experienced after the surgery and the complexities she faced in navigating her sexual relationship with her partner

**Conclusion:** The findings from this study highlight that after a mastectomy participants had significant body image and sexual health issues. These results extended our understanding of the supportive care needs of Arabic women after mastectomy from the family member and the health professional.

## **Biography**

Rawan ALSABABHA is researcher, RN, MSN and a PhD candidate at School of Nursing & Midwifery, Western Sydney University.