

# Patient Satisfaction and Quality of Life After Breast-Conserving Surgery and Intraoperative Radiotherapy in South African Breast Cancer Patients: A Cross Sectional Study

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A research report submitted to the Faculty of Health Sciences, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Medicine (MMED)

07/07/2025

**Declaration:**

I, Shaylin Pillay, declare that this research report is of my own, unaided work. The contents of the paper are my original work. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Medicine at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for a degree or examination at any other University.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Pillay', with a stylized, cursive script.

Signed on this 7th day of July 2025

**Dedication:**

This project is dedicated to all the women who participated in this study. Their strength and perseverance through the journey of breast cancer is remarkable.

Presentations from this study:

This study has not been presented or published in any form.

## **Abstract:**

**Background:** Breast-conserving surgery (BCS) combined with intraoperative radiotherapy (IORT) is an emerging treatment option for early-stage breast cancer. While its oncological outcomes have been well-studied, there is limited research on patient-reported satisfaction and quality of life (QoL) following IORT, particularly in South Africa. This study aims to assess patient satisfaction and QoL after IORT using the BREAST-Q Breast-Conserving Therapy (BCT) module.

**Methods:** A cross-sectional study was conducted at Milpark Hospital, Johannesburg. Patients who underwent BCS with IORT from 2017 - June 2024 were invited to participate. The BREAST-Q BCT questionnaire was used to assess key QoL domains, including breast satisfaction, psychosocial well-being, sexual well-being, cancer worry, and radiation-related side effects. Statistical analyses, including descriptive statistics, and non-parametric comparisons, were performed in JASP.

**Results:** There was a 42% response rate. Breast satisfaction scores were generally high, with most patients reporting favourable outcomes. Psychosocial well-being and sexual well-being showed moderate to low satisfaction levels, and cancer worry remained a prevalent concern. No significant differences were observed between patients receiving IORT alone versus those who received additional external beam radiation therapy ( $p > 0.05$ ).

**Conclusion:** The study is limited by its small sample size ( $n=55$ ) and single-centre design, which may affect generalisability. Future multi-centre studies with larger cohorts are needed. These findings support the use of patient-reported outcome measures in evaluating breast cancer treatments and highlight the need for psychosocial interventions to improve long-term well-being.

**Acknowledgements:**

I would like to thank all participants for their invaluable contributions to this research. Their willingness to share their experiences has been essential in understanding patient-reported outcomes in breast cancer treatment. I would also like to thank Milpark hospital and the staff of the Breast Care Centre of Excellence, for all their assistance.

Without my supervisors, this study would not have been possible. Thank you to Prof Carol Benn, Dr van den Bergh and Prof Sofianos for their amazing support, assistance and insight.

### Declaration of interests:

I have nothing to declare

### Funding:

This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

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## Abbreviations/Nomenclature:

1. APBI: Accelerated Partial Breast Irradiation
2. BCS: Breast Conserving Surgery
3. BREAST-Q: Breast Questionnaire 2.0
4. BREAST-QBCT: A patient-reported outcome measure designed to assess satisfaction with breast cancer treatments.
5. DCIS: Ductal Carcinoma In Situ
6. EBRT: External beam radiation therapy, a method of delivering a beam of high-energy x-rays to the location of the tumour.
7. ER: Oestrogen Receptor
8. HER2: Human Epidermal Growth Factor Receptor 2
9. HRQoL: Health Related Quality of Life
- 10.IDC: Invasive Ductal Carcinoma
- 11.IQR: Interquartile Range
- 12.IORT: Intra-operative radiation therapy, a form of radiation treatment delivered during surgery.
- 13.KI-67: A marker of cell proliferation
- 14.PR: Progesterone Receptor
- 15.PROs: Patient Reported Outcomes
- 16.PROM: Patient Reported Outcome Measures
- 17.QoL: Quality of Life

## **Introduction:**

Breast cancer remains a significant global health challenge, representing the most frequently diagnosed cancer among women and accounting for a substantial proportion of all female cancer diagnoses [1–3]. The rising incidence of breast cancer [4], coupled with advancements in early detection [3], underscores the critical need for effective and patient-centred treatment strategies. Breast-conserving surgery (BCS) followed by radiotherapy has become a standard approach for early stage breast cancer [5].

Radiation for early-stage breast cancer can be done in several ways, depending on the clinical picture [6]. These radiation options include whole-breast external beam radiation therapy (EBRT) or accelerated partial breast irradiation (APBI). The choice of radiation modality is often guided by the patient's individual risk of recurrence [7].

EBRT is done over multiple visits post operatively. It is administered through an external beam and has been associated with increased irradiation of normal tissue, leading to long term complications [6]. EBRT is currently the most commonly used form of radiation in South Africa. In November 2017 Milpark Hospital in Gauteng, was the first hospital, in South Africa, to offer single dose intraoperative radiation therapy (IORT), a type of APBI, for early-stage breast cancer [8].

IORT provides a targeted, single-dose radiation directly to the tumour location during BCS [7]. This approach minimizes radiation exposure to surrounding tissues and eliminates the need for multiple postoperative visits, potentially offering significant advantages for patients [6].

IORT holds promise as a valuable adjunct to BCS, potentially leading to improved patient satisfaction [9]. Integrating patient-reported outcome measures (PROs) is essential for comprehensively evaluating the impact of radiation therapy on quality of life (QoL) [10]. By incorporating the patient's perspective on their treatment experience and its effect on their QoL, clinicians and researchers can gain deeper insights into the effectiveness and broader impact of different treatment modalities [10].

The BREAST-Q is a validated instrument specifically designed to capture PROs related to breast surgery, including health-related quality of life (HRQoL) and patient satisfaction [11]. Developed at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Centre (in 2009), this tool has been widely adopted by both clinicians and researchers due to its demonstrated reliability and validity in measuring these outcomes [12]. A 2018 systematic review highlighted the BREAST-Q's ability to provide meaningful data that can inform clinical decision-making [13].

The questionnaire is modular in nature and offers different versions tailored to specific

breast cancer treatments [7]. The BREAST-Q BCT module is designed specifically for patients undergoing BCS and has been widely used in research and translated into numerous languages, demonstrating its cross-cultural validity [11,14]. The BREAST-Q BCT comprises several stand-alone domains, including quality of life and satisfaction scales, which can be used individually or in combination (Figure 1) [14].

## BREAST CANCER FRAMEWORK

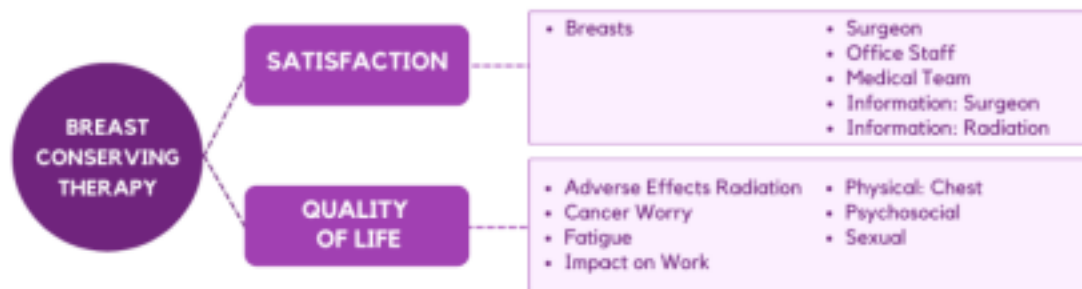


Figure 1: BREAST-Q BCT Module [14]

Each question uses a scale measure, and the self-administered questionnaire can be used cross-sectionally or longitudinally, pre- and post-operatively [14]. The BREAST-Q BCT is a valuable tool for assessing patient satisfaction and QoL after IORT, providing insights into the patient experience and informing potential areas for improvement [12,13].

IORT has experienced a surge in global adoption, with over 260 facilities across 35 nations currently offering this treatment [15]. Patients are increasingly choosing IORT over EBRT due to its convenience and reduced travel burden [15]. However, despite this growing adoption, research examining patient-reported outcomes following IORT remains limited. This study aims to address this gap by investigating patient satisfaction and quality of life among South African breast cancer patients who have undergone IORT in conjunction with breast-conserving surgery, within the private healthcare sector.

## **Methods:**

This cross-sectional study utilised data from files and patient reported outcomes to evaluate patient satisfaction and quality of life among South African breast cancer patients following breast-conserving surgery (BCS) and intraoperative radiation therapy (IORT). The study was conducted at the Breast Care Centre of Excellence, located in Milpark Hospital, Johannesburg, South Africa.

## **Study Population and Data Collection:**

The study population comprised women aged 18 years and older who underwent BCS and IORT at Milpark Hospital between 2017 and June 2024 for early-stage breast cancer. Patients were eligible for inclusion if they had received IORT at least six months prior to data collection. To ensure a representative sample and minimise bias, no other exclusion criteria were implemented.

Permission to conduct the research was granted by Prof. Carol Benn, who leads the Breast Care Centre of Excellence at Netcare Milpark Hospital and the CEO of Milpark Hospital. Following ethical approval from the University of the Witwatersrand Human Research Ethics Committee (Medical) (HREC(Medical)), protocol number M241169, potential participants were identified and contacted by the Breast Care Centre of Excellence secretary.

Participants were provided with information about the study telephonically, and those who agreed were given a link to the self-administered BREAST-Q BCT questionnaire via RedCap. The questionnaire was anonymous.

## **Data Collection**

The BREAST-Q license was obtained for research purposes, and copyright information was included on all questionnaires.

The BREAST-Q BCT questionnaire, integrated into RedCap, was pre-tested using a focus group. Six of the 15 scales of the BREAST-Q BCT were selected for this study, focusing on satisfaction with breasts, psychosocial well-being, sexual well-being, cancer worry, physical well-being, and adverse effects of radiation.

Data collected from the files only occurred after the BREAST-Q BCT questionnaire was completed. The data collected included patient demographics (age at surgery and current age, comorbidities, smoking history, and race), and clinical data (tumour characteristics: biology, location, size; and post-operative complications).

## **Data Analysis**

The BREAST-Q BCT questionnaire uses Likert scales for individual questions. Domain scores were calculated by summing the responses for each domain and converting them to a standardized score out of 100 using conversion tables provided by the Q-portfolio.

Data were exported from RedCap to Microsoft Excel, and subsequent statistical analyses were performed using JASP software. Descriptive statistics were generated for all variables. Given that the majority of the data were non-parametrically distributed, the median and interquartile range were used as measures of central tendency and dispersion, respectively. For normally distributed data, the mean and standard deviation were reported.

Skewness and kurtosis were used to assess normality. Psychosocial well-being and satisfaction with breasts demonstrated relatively low skewness and kurtosis values, indicating approximate normality. However, sexual well-being, cancer worry, and physical well-being displayed moderate skewness, suggesting non-normal distributions. Given these findings, non-parametric tests were preferred for analysis. Kendall's Tau-b correlation coefficient ( $T_b$ ), and Spearman's co-efficient was calculated and the Kruskal-Wallis test was done. A p-value of less than 0.05 was considered statistically significant.

## **Results:**

Of the 197 eligible patients identified, 29 were deceased and 31 could not be reached. Questionnaires were sent to the remaining 137 patients, resulting in a 42% response rate with 58 completed questionnaires returned (Figure 2). Of these, 55 were included in the final analysis after excluding 3 incompletely filled questionnaires.

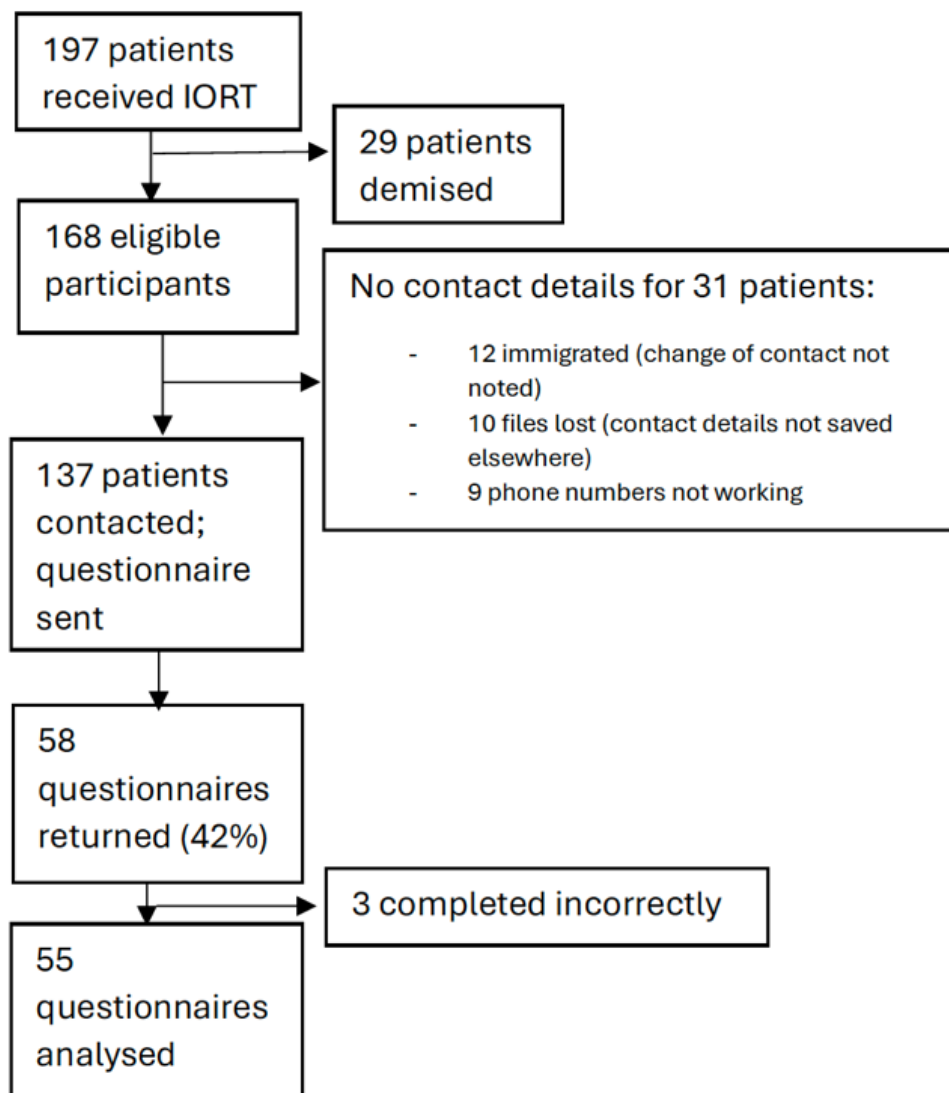


Figure 2: Patient Recruitment to Study

The average age at the time of IORT was 54 years (range: 27-82). The majority of participants (n=37, 67.3%) identified as Caucasian, followed by African (n=5, 9.1%) and South-East Asian (n=4, 7.2%). Ethnicity was not recorded for nine participants. All patients received IORT for primary breast cancer, with invasive ductal carcinoma (IDC) unspecified being the most common histological type. Ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS) was also present in 49% of patients. Eleven percent of patients were smokers, and 75% had at least one comorbidity, such as anxiety or hypertension.

The mean tumour diameter was 25.8mm (range: 4.3mm-53mm). Six patients experienced complications, including two major complications (cancer recurrence). 31% (n=17) of participants received IORT only, 69% (n=38) received IORT and then EBRT booster.

Descriptive statistics for the BREAST-Q BCT domains are presented in Table 1. Satisfaction

with breasts (mean = 62.15, SD = 21.79) and physical well-being (mean = 66.58, SD = 17.94) showed the highest mean scores. Psychosocial well-being had a mean of 58.7 (SD=21.1). Cancer worry (mean = 53.89, SD = 21.90) and sexual well-being (mean = 42.94, SD = 20.34) had considerably lower mean scores. Cancer worry also exhibited the greatest variability in responses.

*Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of the Breast -Q BCT responses*

| Question                  | Number of responses (n)    | Mean (SD)     | Median (Q1,Q3) |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Sexual Wellbeing          | 51                         | 42.94 (20.34) | 43 (31, 57.5)  |
| Psychosocial Wellbeing    | 55                         | 58.7 (21.1)   | 58 (48, 67.5)  |
| Physical Wellbeing        | 55                         | 66.58 (17.94) | 66 (52, 76)    |
| Satisfaction with Breasts | 53 (2 required mastectomy) | 62.15 (21.79) | 65 (51, 72)    |
| Cancer Worry              | 55                         | 53.89 (21.9)  | 51(42.5, 65)   |

Spearman's rank correlation coefficient was used to assess relationships between continuous ordinal variables. A statistically significant negative correlation was found between cancer worry and psychosocial well-being ( $\rho = -0.47$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Sexual well-being and psychosocial well-being were strongly and positively correlated ( $\rho = 0.70$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) as seen in figure 3 and 4. Satisfaction with breasts and physical well-being demonstrated a moderate positive correlation ( $\rho = 0.56$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ). The correlation between age at the procedure and cancer worry was weak and not statistically significant ( $\tau_b = -0.089$ ,  $p = 0.348$ ).

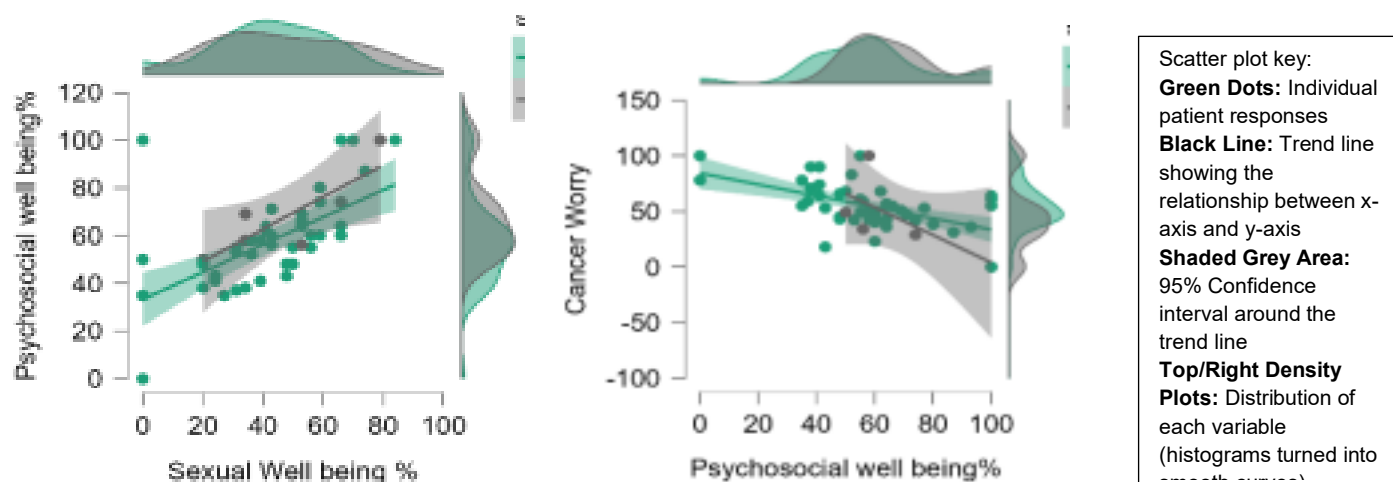


Figure 4: Scatter plot comparing sexual well-being and psychosocial well-being scores

Figure 3: Scatter plot comparing psychosocial well-being and cancer worry response scores

The Mann-Whitney U test and Kruskal-Wallis test were used to compare categorical variables with non-normally distributed continuous variables. No statistically significant differences were observed in cancer worry ( $p = 0.116$ ), sexual well-being ( $p = 0.091$ ), psychosocial well-being ( $p = 0.939$ ), satisfaction with breasts ( $p = 0.532$ ), or physical well-being ( $p = 0.187$ ) between participants who received IORT alone and those who received IORT plus EBRT. Similarly, Kruskal-Wallis tests revealed no significant impact of neoadjuvant therapy, race, or cancer stage on participant satisfaction or well-being

## Discussion:

This study investigated patient-reported outcomes following breast-conserving surgery (BCS) and intraoperative radiation therapy (IORT) in a South African cohort. The findings provide valuable insights into patient satisfaction and quality of life (QoL) following this treatment modality.

The BREAST-Q BCT results revealed varying levels of satisfaction and well-being across different domains. While participants reported relatively high scores for satisfaction with breasts (mean 62.15) and physical well-being (mean 66.58), scores for sexual well-being (mean 42.94) and cancer worry (mean 53.89) were considerably lower.

These findings align with previous research demonstrating that sexual well-being is often negatively impacted following breast cancer treatment [16]. The lower scores in sexual well-being may be attributed to a combination of physical factors (e.g., hormonal changes, menopausal symptoms, body image concerns) and psychological factors (e.g., anxiety, fear of recurrence, changes in self-esteem) [17]. Sexual well-being also had the lowest response rate as three participants noted that they were no longer sexually active and one participant

did not respond at all. The moderate level of cancer worry observed suggests that while participants may have concerns about recurrence, they are potentially coping effectively [13]. However, the wide range of responses for cancer worry (SD 21.9) indicates that individual experiences and coping mechanisms vary considerably.

The relatively high scores for satisfaction with breasts and physical well-being suggest that IORT, in conjunction with BCS, may effectively preserve physical function and aesthetic outcomes. These findings are consistent with studies reporting favourable cosmetic results and functional outcomes after IORT [16]. The positive impact on physical well-being could be attributed to the targeted nature of IORT, minimizing radiation exposure to healthy tissues and reducing the risk of long term complications associated with external beam radiation [9].

Comparing our findings with other studies is challenging due to variations in study populations, treatment protocols, assessment and statistic tools. Several studies did not look at cancer worry but instead focused on patient satisfaction with medical staff [18], while certain studies used a different survey tool [19].

Despite these challenges, some studies using the BREAST-Q BCT have also reported similar trends, with lower scores in sexual well-being and higher scores in physical well-being and satisfaction with breasts [16].

A study by Dahlback et al, in 2017 found that the median score for breast satisfaction (post BCS) was 66 (IQR 57-80)[20]. Another study, conducted in the Netherlands in 2018, by Lagendijk et al, showed a higher quality of life across all the variables. Lagendijk et al's study found a mean of 71.2 for physical well-being, 70.1 for psychosocial well-being, 65.7 for satisfaction with breasts and 57.5 for sexual well-being. The participants average age was 54 years old [21]. These variations highlight the importance of considering contextual factors when interpreting patient-reported outcomes.

Correlation analysis revealed a significant negative correlation between cancer worry and psychosocial well-being, indicating that higher levels of worry are associated with lower psychosocial well-being. This finding underscores the interconnectedness of psychological factors and the impact of cancer-related anxieties on overall well-being. The strong positive correlation between sexual well-being and psychosocial well-being suggests that improvements in sexual function and satisfaction may positively influence overall psychological and social well-being. The moderate positive correlation between satisfaction with breasts and physical well-being further supports the importance of aesthetic and functional outcomes in contributing to patient satisfaction.

Our study found no significant differences in any of the BREAST-Q domains between patients who received IORT alone and those who received IORT plus EBRT. This suggests that both treatment approaches may yield comparable patient-reported outcomes. Despite previous research linking EBRT to increased skin-related side effects [22] (which could negatively impact quality of life and satisfaction), our sample did not reflect these findings. This may be due to sample size limitations, variability in patient-reported perception, or the timing of questionnaire completion. Nevertheless, this observation warrants further investigation through studies with larger sample sizes and long-term follow-up to better assess the differential impact of radiation modalities on patient experience.

## **Limitations**

This study has several limitations. The relatively small sample size (n=55) may limit the generalisability of the findings and reduce the power to detect statistically significant differences. The low response rate (42%) raises the possibility of response bias, as participants who chose to participate may differ systematically from those who did not. Furthermore, the cross-sectional design of the study provides a snapshot of patient-reported outcomes at a single point in time and does not capture changes over time.

The lack of pre-treatment baseline data also limits our ability to assess changes in QoL and satisfaction directly related to the treatment. Finally, the study was conducted at a single centre, which may further limit generalisability.

Future research should address the limitations of this study by including larger, more diverse samples, utilising longitudinal study designs, and incorporating pre-treatment baseline assessments. This study also did not evaluate the time elapsed since IORT as a variable. Future studies could explore how time since treatment affects patient-reported quality of life.

Further investigation is also needed to explore the specific factors contributing to lower sexual well-being and to develop targeted interventions to address these issues. Qualitative studies exploring participants' experiences and perceptions of IORT could provide valuable insights to complement quantitative findings. Additionally, research comparing IORT with other radiation modalities, such as EBRT, using PROs is warranted.

## **Conclusion:**

This study provides valuable data on patient-reported outcomes following BCS and IORT in a South African population. The findings highlight the importance of assessing multiple domains of QoL and satisfaction, including sexual well-being and cancer worry. While IORT appears to be associated with favourable physical and aesthetic outcomes, further research is needed to optimise patient-centred care and address the unmet needs of patients undergoing breast cancer treatment. As IORT becomes more accessible in the private sector,

tools like the BREAST-Q can be integrated into clinical pathways to support patient-centred decision-making and improve care delivery. This study lays the foundation for future local research focused on the lived experiences of South African breast cancer patients.

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**Appendix List:**

Appendix A: Approved Study Protocol

Appendix B: Milpark Hospital CEO Approval

Appendix C: Human Research ethics committee clearance certificate

Appendix D: Turnitin report cover page

Appendix E: Journal guidelines to authors

## Appendix A: Approved Study Proposal

# **Patient Satisfaction and Quality of Life After Breast-Conserving Surgery and Intraoperative Radiotherapy in South African Breast Cancer Patients: A Cross-Sectional Study**

Shaylin Pillay

Student Number: 300854



Supervisors:

- 1) Professor Carol Benn, FCS (SA)  
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A research proposal submitted to the Faculty of Health Sciences, University of the Witwatersrand. In fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Medicine (MMed), 2024

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**Nomenclature**

18. APBI – Accelerated Partial Breast Irradiation 19. BCS Breast  
Conserving Surgery 20. BREAST-Q Breast Questionnaire 2.0 21.  
BREAST-Q BCT BREAST-Q Breast Conserving Therapy 22.  
EBRT External Beam Radiation Therapy 23. HRQoL Health  
Related Quality of Life 24. IORT Intraoperative Radiation Therapy  
25. IQR Interquartile Range  
26. PROs Patient Reported Outcomes 27. PROM Patient  
Reported Outcome Measures 28. QoL Quality of Life

## **1.1 Introduction / Background**

Breast cancer remains a prevalent health concern worldwide (1), and substantial research has focused on optimising treatment outcomes (2). It is the most commonly diagnosed cancer among women (3), necessitating effective and patient-centred treatment strategies. Breast-conserving surgery (BCS) combined with radiotherapy is a standard treatment modality aimed at removing cancer while preserving breast appearance and function in early stage cancer (4). Intraoperative radiation therapy (IORT) is a promising adjunct to BCS, offering targeted radiation during surgery and potentially improving patient outcomes (5). Assessing patient satisfaction and post treatment quality of life (QoL) is critical for understanding the holistic impact of these interventions (6). The BREAST-Q is a validated tool specifically designed for this purpose, providing insights into patient-reported outcomes of breast cancer treatment (7).

## **1.2 Literature Review**

In 2018, 23.2% of all cancers diagnosed in females were attributed to breast cancer (8). The incidence is increasing (8). Through health promotion, breast cancer is being diagnosed at earlier stages (3). South Africa's current guidelines, for early-stage breast cancer, advise breast-conserving surgery with/without radiation or a mastectomy only (9).

Radiation for early-stage breast cancer can be done in several ways, depending on the clinical picture (10). These radiation options include whole-breast external beam radiation therapy (EBRT) or accelerated partial breast irradiation (APBI). The choice of radiation depends on the patients' risk for recurrence (11).

EBRT is done over multiple visits post operatively. It is administered through an external beam and has been associated with increased irradiation of normal tissue, leading to long term complications (10). EBRT is currently the most commonly used form of radiation in South Africa, however in November 2017 Milpark Hospital in Gauteng was the first hospital to offer single dose intraoperative radiation therapy (IORT), a type of APBI, for early-stage breast cancer (12).

IORT provides irradiation directly targeted to the tumour location, in theatre, during breast conserving surgery (11). It is a single dose, thereby not requiring patients to make multiple visits to the hospital for radiation therapy and it is targeted, reducing

the risk of irradiating normal, surrounding tissue (10).

Multiple studies have been carried out, in multiple settings on multiple population groups comparing the efficacy of single dose IORT in comparison to post operative EBRT (5). The largest study was the TARGIT – A trial, which was a randomised controlled trial. The study was conducted across 10 countries in 32 centres and included 2298 women aged 45 and older with invasive ductal carcinoma (13). The study's primary outcome was to assess the local recurrence rate after five years between patients who received IORT and EBRT (13). The study also compared breast cancer mortality and morbidity from other causes between the two arms. The study found that IORT was as effective as EBRT in preventing local recurrence and IORT resulted in less deaths from other causes (13).

The study is generalisable due to its multicentre approach and large sample size from different countries; however, it has been criticised on the choice of non-inferiority margin (study decided on 2.5% for local recurrence) (14). The patients and clinicians also knew which treatment was received which may have led to bias in the reporting of outcomes and patient management. Nevertheless, IORT has been proven to be effective in subsequent trials carried out in China, Japan and the USA to name a few (11,15).

During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, IORT was found to be an invaluable tool as it limited vulnerable patient's exposure to the virus, by decreasing their need for post operative radiation (12). This decrease in patient visits was not only beneficial to the patient but was also noted to reduce the resource strain to hospitals (12). A follow up to the TARGIT- A trial also noted the environmental benefits of IORT (due to reduced carbon emissions from travelling)(17).

No matter which radiation option a patient undergoes, there is a myriad of complications that may occur, these are both psychological and physical (18). Patient reported outcome measures are a vital tool in monitoring these complications and their effect to a patient's quality of life (19). By including the patient's perspective on their management and the effect to their quality of life (QoL), researchers and clinicians can gain further insight into the efficacy of their treatment modalities (19).

The BREAST-Q is a validated tool for collecting patient-reported outcomes (PROs) (20). It was developed in 2009 and has been used by both clinicians and researchers alike to collect health-related quality of life (HRQoL) and patient

satisfaction data related to breast surgery (21). It was developed by the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer centre. Multiple studies have found the questionnaire to be effective in measuring patients' satisfaction and HRQoL. A systematic review carried out in 2018 noted that the information noted in the BREAST – Q was reliable and meaningful, with a potential to impact clinical decision making (18). Another systematic review conducted in 2021 by a different group of researchers also found the BREAST – Q to be effective and reliable and concluded that it was an important tool to assess surgical outcomes (22).

The BREAST – Q has different questionnaires depending on the management choice (7). There is a BREAST – Q designed specifically for BCS – the BREAST-Q BCT. The BREAST – Q BCT has been utilised in multiple studies and has been translated into many languages (23). A study conducted in Europe, translated the BREAST – Q BCT to German and found the validity of the questionnaire still held (20).

The BREAST – Q BCT is further separated into several domains. The modules are stand alone questionnaires and may be used all together or on their own (23). The domains consist of quality of life and satisfaction domains. The domains are shown in fig 1 (23).

## BREAST CANCER FRAMEWORK

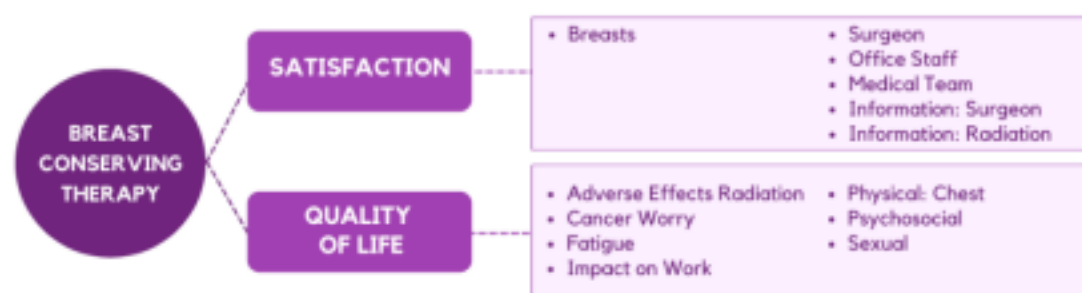


Figure 5.1: BREAST-Q BCT Module(23)

Each of the questions are a scale measure. The questionnaire is self-administered and can be administered as a cross-sectional survey or longitudinally pre-operatively and thereafter, postoperatively. Each component may be used and interpreted independently (23).

The BREAST-Q BCT can be utilised to assess patient satisfaction and quality of life post IORT and provide insight into the effectiveness of IORT from a patient perspective (18). The questionnaire can assist in ascertaining whether the IORT experience is satisfactory for patients and if not, highlight areas of improvement (21).

Intraoperative radiation therapy (IORT) has seen a surge in global adoption, with over 260 facilities across 35 nations currently providing this treatment option (17). Patients are increasingly favouring IORT over EBRT due to its convenience and reduced travel requirements (24). However, despite this growing utilisation, there remains a dearth of research examining patient-reported outcomes following IORT.

The present study aims to address this gap by investigating the level of patient satisfaction and quality of life among South African breast cancer patients who have undergone IORT in conjunction with breast-conserving surgery.

### **1.3 Study aim and objectives**

#### **Aim:**

To evaluate the level of patient satisfaction and quality of life following breast conserving surgery combined with intraoperative radiation therapy in a cohort of South African breast cancer patients, as measured by the BREAST-Q BCT Questionnaire.

#### **Objectives:**

1. To evaluate the impact of IORT on patients' quality of life, focusing on the psychosocial, sexual and physical well-being domains.
2. To identify factors influencing patient-reported outcomes, such as age, tumour biology, and surgical complications, and how they affect satisfaction and QoL post treatment.
3. To compare the post-operative experiences of patients who received IORT with findings from existing literature.

### **Methodology**

#### **2.1 Research Question:**

What is the level of patient satisfaction and quality of life, as measured by the BREAST-Q BCT, among South African breast cancer patients who have undergone

intraoperative radiation therapy and breast-conserving surgery in a single-centre cross-sectional study?

2.2 Research Design

This is a cross-sectional study. Data will be collected from patient files. The Breast-Q BCT questionnaire will be distributed to patients who have met the inclusion criteria, are at least six months post radiation and have provided consent.

Six of the 15 scales were found to be relevant to this study and will be used independently (stated in table 1).

Table 2 Illustrating Datapoints

| Data Category | Data Point |
|---------------|------------|
|---------------|------------|

|                           |                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 8                         |                                                                                                                                                   |
| Demographics              | Age (current and at surgery),<br>comorbidities, smoking history, race                                                                             |
| Clinical Data             | Tumour Characteristics: Biology,<br>Location, Size<br>Post-operative complications                                                                |
| Patient-Reported Outcomes | Satisfaction with breasts,<br>Psychosocial wellbeing, sexual<br>wellbeing, cancer worry, physical<br>wellbeing, adverse effects with<br>radiation |

The questionnaire is attached as appendix A

2.3 Study Population

All women from the age of 18 years who have had early-stage breast cancer and underwent breast-conserving surgery and IORT at Milpark Hospital between 2017 and 2024. Patients who suffered from distant metastases, required a modified radical mastectomy for local recurrence after breast-conserving therapy, or required EBRT post IORT will not be included. Patients suffering from serious co-morbidities

that could affect the quality-of-life assessment will also be excluded.

#### Inclusion Criteria:

- 1 Females >18 years of age, diagnosed with early-stage breast cancer
- 2 Patients who underwent breast conserving surgery and IORT at Milpark Hospital
- 3 Intervention provided from 2017 – June 2024
- 4 Patients that have undergone IORT at least six months prior to the interview
- 5 Informed consent signed

Exclusion Criteria: No exclusion criteria have been implemented in this study to minimise research bias and to ensure a more representative sample.

#### 2.4 Sample Size:

The calculated sample size is 132 patients, with a total of 200 patients undergoing isolated IORT at Milpark hospital from 2017 – June 2024. This was calculated using a z score of 1.96 (95% confidence), a 5 % margin of error and 0.5 standard deviation.

$$\text{Sample Size} = \frac{[z^2 * p(1-p)] / e^2}{1 + [z^2 * p(1-p)] / e^2 * N}$$

#### 2.5 Study Site:

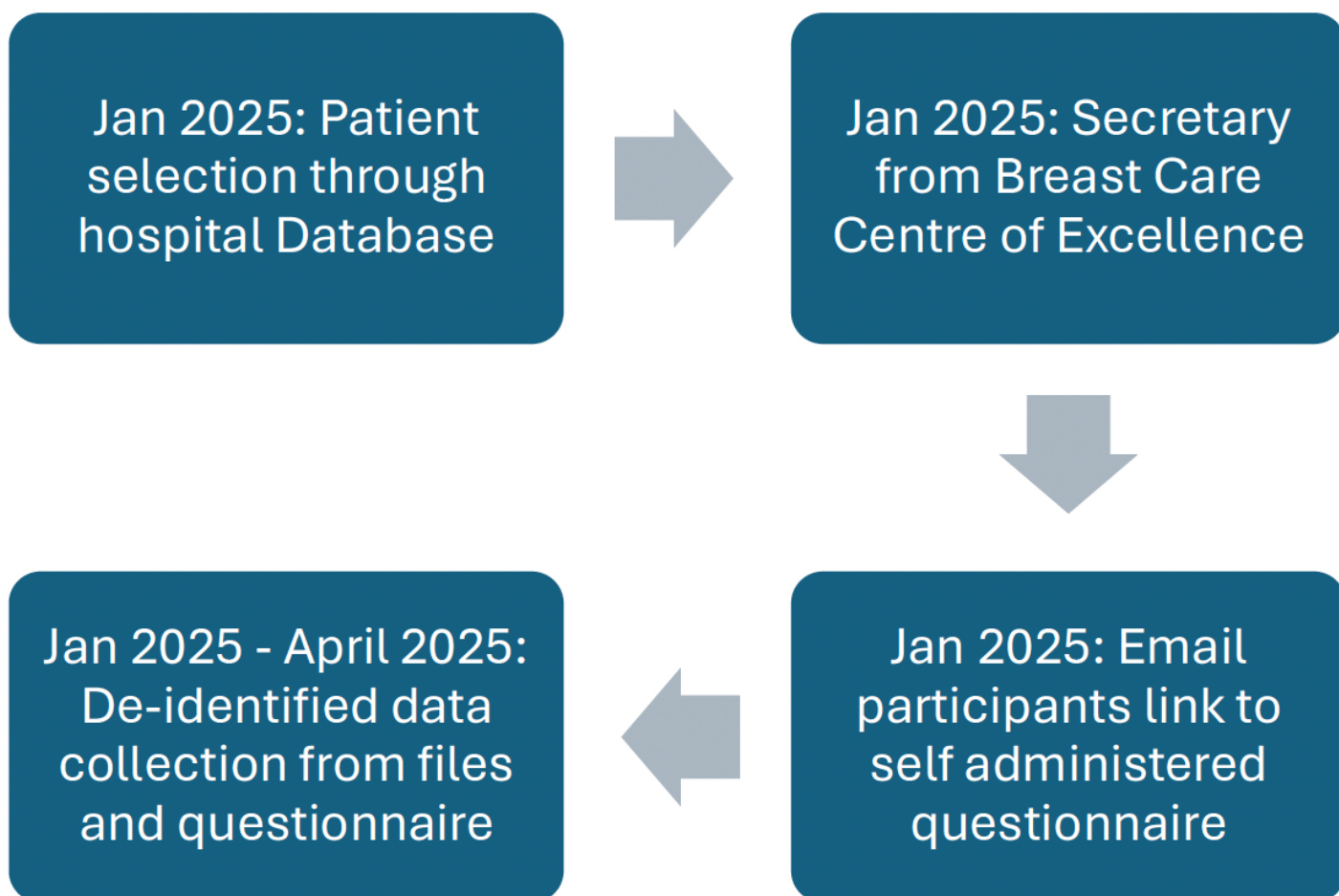
Milpark Hospital – A private hospital located in Johannesburg, South Africa, and the first hospital in Africa to offer IORT.

#### 2.6 Data Collection:

The BREAST-Q patient-reported outcome measure licence was obtained under the condition that it would only be used for research purposes. Copyright will be included in all distributed questionnaires.

Once ethics has been approved, the secretary from the Breast Care Centre of Excellence will contact potential participants, explaining the nature of the study. Those who agree to participate will then be emailed a link to the self-administered questionnaire. If the patient does not understand English, a translator will explain the study in the language the patient understands. The questionnaire is self-administered, as such consent by the participant is implied by completing the questionnaire.

The questionnaire has been integrated into RedCap and will be pre-tested by a focus group. Participation is voluntary, and all information will remain confidential. For those uncomfortable with technology, the survey can be conducted telephonically or in person, with data manually entered into RedCap. Reminder emails and phone calls will be made to non-respondents.



*Figure 6: Data Collection Flowchart*

## **2.7 Data Storage**

All data captured will be kept anonymous using study IDs. All collected data will be stored securely within the RedCap system, which is compliant with data protection regulations and the POPIA act. Physical copies of consent forms will be stored in a locked cabinet within the principal investigator's office for at least 10 years. Digital data (including recordings) will be encrypted and backed up regularly, on a password protected laptop, to prevent data loss. Access to the data will be restricted to authorised personnel only, ensuring confidentiality and data integrity.

## **2.8 Data analysis**

The data captured on RedCap will be exported into a pre-configured Microsoft Excel worksheet, and scores will be calculated according to the BREAST – Q conversion tables. The raw score is converted to a score of 0 – 100, with a higher score indicating a higher level of satisfaction or quality of life. The data collected will assess their current quality of life and satisfaction.

The score out of 100 for each category will then be interpreted and compared. Descriptive statistics will be used to summarise the characteristics of the data. Means and standard deviation will be utilised for the scores generated, while frequency distribution will be used to describe categorical variables e.g. tumour type and patient demographics. If the data is non-parametric then median and interquartile range will be used.

Comparative analyses will be conducted to assess differences in patient satisfaction and quality of life across various demographic and treatment-related factors. Inferential statistics, such as t-tests or ANOVA, will be used to determine the significance of observed differences, if variables demonstrate normal distribution. Kruskal Wallis analysis will be used if the variables are not normally distributed. A p-value of  $<0.05$  will be considered statistically significant.

The strength of association between numerical variables will be assessed using the Pearson correlation coefficient for normally distributed variables, while the Spearman rank correlation coefficient will be used for variables that do not follow a normal distribution. A random -effect single arm meta-analysis of the mean scores will be run to compare the BREAST-Q means of this study with similar studies conducted.

## **2.9 Ethics**

Ethics approval will be sought from the Human Research Ethics Committee (Medical) (HREC) at the University of the Witwatersrand (WITS). Data will be collected from the Breast Care Centre of Excellence at Netcare Milpark Hospital. The centre is run by Prof. Carol Benn (the supervisor of this research), who has explicitly provided permission to conduct this research.

All efforts will be undertaken to ensure patient confidentiality and anonymity, with the use of study identity numbers and the removal of any identifying features not relevant to the study. Informed consent and voluntary participation will be emphasised, with participants made aware that they may leave the study at any point and their information will only be used with their expressed permission. Data will be stored on encrypted devices and will only be accessible to the principal investigator and supervisors.

**Further Considerations:**

The participants will be constantly communicated with throughout the study and the findings will be reported back to them.

3.1 Timing

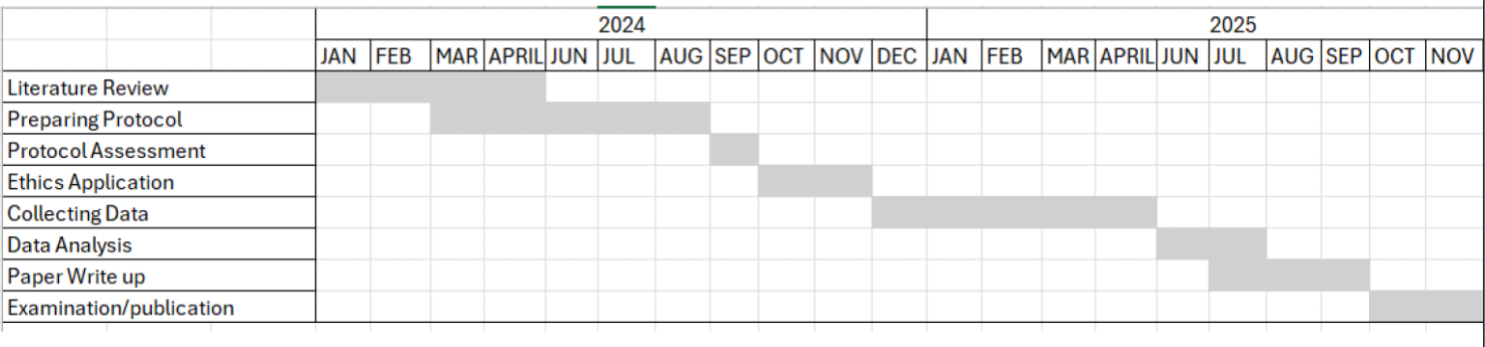


Figure 7.1 GANTT Chart

3.2 Funding

The anticipated cost of the study is R2000. The bulk of the cost will be telephone calls and will be self-funded by the author.

*Table 3 Depicting Estimated Costs*

| Item            | Price |
|-----------------|-------|
| Telephone Calls | R1300 |
| Stationary      | R100  |
| Petrol          | R600  |

### **3.3 Limitations**

There may be an unwillingness to participate due to inconvenience. Through emphasising that their information will be used to improve future patient's experiences and by trying

to accommodate any technological disadvantages through mail and telephonic questionnaires, the principal investigator hopes to mitigate this risk.

The other limitation is that patients may have recall bias when answering questions regarding their experience during the procedure. Nevertheless, the questionnaire mainly asks for their current quality of life and their level of satisfaction.

As a single-centre study, findings may not be generalisable to all South African breast cancer patients or those in different socioeconomic settings.

Cross-sectional design limits the ability to infer causality or track changes over time, it may be valuable to repeat the study, including a pre-operative and post-operative questionnaire.

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## **Appendices**

Appendix A: BREAST-Q BCT

Questionnaire Appendix B: Data

Collection Tool Appendix C: Participant  
Information Sheet

# **BREAST-Q®**

## **Version 2.0**

### **Breast Conserving Therapy Module**

## **Pre- and**

## **Postoperative Scales**

# English Version

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## **BREAST-Q™ – BREAST CANCER CORE SCALE (PRE- AND POSTOPERATIVE)**

### **VERSION 2.0: PSYCHOSOCIAL WELL-BEING**

With your breast area in mind, in the past week, how often have you felt:

|                                                           | None<br>of the<br>time | A little<br>of the<br>time | Some<br>of the<br>time | Most<br>of the<br>time | All of<br>the<br>time |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| a. Confident in a social setting?                         | 1                      | 2                          | 3                      | 4                      | 5                     |
| b. Emotionally able to do the things that you want to do? | 1                      | 2                          | 3                      | 4                      | 5                     |
| c. Emotionally healthy?                                   | 1                      | 2                          | 3                      | 4                      | 5                     |
| d. Of equal worth to other women?                         | 1                      | 2                          | 3                      | 4                      | 5                     |

|                              |   |   |   |   |   |
|------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| e. Self-confident?           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| f. Feminine in your clothes? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| g. Accepting of your body?   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| h. Normal?                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| i. Like other women?         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| j. Attractive?               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

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Thinking of your sexuality, how often do you generally feel:

|                                                | <b>None<br/>of the<br/>time</b> | <b>A little<br/>of the<br/>time</b> | <b>Some<br/>of the<br/>time</b> | <b>Most of<br/>the time</b> | <b>All of<br/>the time</b> |
|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| a. Sexually attractive in your clothes?        | 1                               | 2                                   | 3                               | 4                           | 5                          |
| b. Comfortable/at ease during sexual activity? | 1                               | 2                                   | 3                               | 4                           | 5                          |
| c. Confident sexually?                         | 1                               | 2                                   | 3                               | 4                           | 5                          |

|                                                                                |   |   |   |   |   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| d. Satisfied with your sex-life?                                               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| e. Confident sexually about how your breast area looks when <u>unclothed</u> ? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| f. Sexually attractive when <u>unclothed</u> ?                                 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

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### CANCER WORRY:

These statements ask about the WORRY you may be experiencing about breast cancer. With your BREAST CANCER in mind, how much do you agree or disagree with each statement:

|  |                                |                              |                           |                             |
|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
|  | <b>Definitely<br/>disagree</b> | <b>Somewhat<br/>disagree</b> | <b>Somewhat<br/>agree</b> | <b>Definitely<br/>agree</b> |
|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|

|                                                                                                                                            | ee | e |   |   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|---|---|---|
| a. I worry my breast cancer may spread to other parts of my body.                                                                          | 1  | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| b. I worry I might get another type of cancer in the future.                                                                               | 1  | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| c. Breast cancer is always in the back of my mind.                                                                                         | 1  | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| d. I worry about late effects that might happen to me.<br><br>(Note: a late effect is a health problem caused by cancer or its treatment). | 1  | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| e. I worry about breast cancer treatment damaging my body.                                                                                 | 1  | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| f. I worry I may die from breast cancer.                                                                                                   | 1  | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| g. I worry about my breast cancer treatment not working.                                                                                   | 1  | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| h. I worry about my breast cancer every day.                                                                                               | 1  | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| i. Worrying about my breast cancer interferes with my daily activities.                                                                    | 1  | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| j. Worrying about breast cancer keeps me from enjoying my life.                                                                            | 1  | 2 | 3 | 4 |

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**PHYSICAL WELL-BEING: CHEST**

In the past week, how often have you experienced:

|                                                                                         | <b>None of<br/>the time</b> | <b>Some of<br/>the time</b> | <b>All of<br/>the time</b> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| a. Difficulty lifting or moving your arms?                                              | <b>1</b>                    | <b>2</b>                    | <b>3</b>                   |
| b. Difficulty sleeping because of discomfort in your breast area?                       | <b>1</b>                    | <b>2</b>                    | <b>3</b>                   |
| c. Tightness in your breast area?                                                       | <b>1</b>                    | <b>2</b>                    | <b>3</b>                   |
| d. Pulling in your breast area?                                                         | <b>1</b>                    | <b>2</b>                    | <b>3</b>                   |
| e. Tenderness in your breast area?                                                      | <b>1</b>                    | <b>2</b>                    | <b>3</b>                   |
| f. Sharp pains in your breast area?                                                     | <b>1</b>                    | <b>2</b>                    | <b>3</b>                   |
| g. Aching feeling in your breast area?                                                  | <b>1</b>                    | <b>2</b>                    | <b>3</b>                   |
| h. Difficulty laying on the side of your lumpectomy breast?                             | <b>1</b>                    | <b>2</b>                    | <b>3</b>                   |
| i. Swelling of the arm (lymphedema) on the side(s) that you had<br>your breast surgery? | <b>1</b>                    | <b>2</b>                    | <b>3</b>                   |

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**SATISFACTION WITH BREASTS**

The following questions are about your breasts and your breast cancer treatment (by treatment, we mean lumpectomy with or without radiation). If you have had a lumpectomy and radiation of both breasts, answer these questions thinking of the breast you are least satisfied with. With your breasts in mind, in the past week, how satisfied or dissatisfied have you been with:

|                                                                    | <b>Very<br/>Dissatisfied</b> | <b>Somewh<br/>at<br/>Dissatisf<br/>ied</b> | <b>Somewh<br/>at<br/>Satisfie<br/>d</b> | <b>Very<br/>Satisfied</b> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| a. How you look in the mirror <u>clothed</u> ?                     | <b>1</b>                     | <b>2</b>                                   | <b>3</b>                                | <b>4</b>                  |
| b. The shape of your lumpectomy breast when you are wearing a bra? | <b>1</b>                     | <b>2</b>                                   | <b>3</b>                                | <b>4</b>                  |
| c. How normal you feel in your clothes?                            | <b>1</b>                     | <b>2</b>                                   | <b>3</b>                                | <b>4</b>                  |
| d. Being able to wear clothing that is more fitted?                | <b>1</b>                     | <b>2</b>                                   | <b>3</b>                                | <b>4</b>                  |
| e. How your lumpectomy breast sits/hangs?                          | <b>1</b>                     | <b>2</b>                                   | <b>3</b>                                | <b>4</b>                  |
| f. How smoothly shaped your lumpectomy breast looks?               | <b>1</b>                     | <b>2</b>                                   | <b>3</b>                                | <b>4</b>                  |
| g. The contour (outline) of your lumpectomy breast?                | <b>1</b>                     | <b>2</b>                                   | <b>3</b>                                | <b>4</b>                  |
| h. How equal in size your breasts are to each other?               | <b>1</b>                     | <b>2</b>                                   | <b>3</b>                                | <b>4</b>                  |
| i. How normal your lumpectomy breast looks?                        | <b>1</b>                     | <b>2</b>                                   | <b>3</b>                                | <b>4</b>                  |

|                                                  |   |   |   |   |
|--------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| j. How much your breasts look the same?          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| k. How you look in the mirror <u>unclothed</u> ? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

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**ADVERSE EFFECTS OF RADIATION**

If you have had radiation on both breasts, answer these questions thinking of the breast you are least satisfied with. With your radiated breast(s) in mind, in the past week, how much have you been bothered by:

|                                                                                                                                | Not at all | A little | A lot |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|----------|-------|
| a. Your radiated breast skin looking different (e.g., too dark or too light)?                                                  | 1          | 2        | 3     |
| b. Marks on your breast skin caused by radiation (e.g., small visible blood vessels)?                                          | 1          | 2        | 3     |
| c. Your radiated breast skin feeling dry?                                                                                      | 1          | 2        | 3     |
| d. Your radiated breast skin feeling sore (sensitive) when touched (e.g., changes in water temperature when you bathe/shower)? | 1          | 2        | 3     |
| e. Your radiated breast skin feeling unnaturally thick (rough, tough) when you touch it?                                       | 1          | 2        | 3     |
| f. Your radiated breast skin feeling irritated by clothing that you wear?                                                      | 1          | 2        | 3     |

## **Appendix B: Data Collection Form**

Data collected from files by investigator

### **1. Data to be collected from patient**

## **Appendix C: Participant Information Sheet**

Participant Information Sheet

**Title of Study:**

**Patient Satisfaction and Quality of Life After Breast-Conserving Surgery and Intraoperative Radiotherapy in South African Breast Cancer Patients: A Cross Sectional Study**

*Principal Investigator:*

Shaylin Pillay, 0837801511, shaylin.pillay@wits.ac.za

*Study Association:*

University of the Witwatersrand

*Purpose of the Study:*

My name is Shaylin Pillay, I am currently training to be a plastic surgeon. As part of my training I need to complete a Masters in Medicine, which requires research.. We are inviting you to participate in this research. The study aims to assess patient satisfaction following intraoperative radiation therapy and breast conserving surgery.and will not only assist me, but will also help us understand how patients feel about their treatment and overall quality of life after surgery. This will assist us in improving our services and management plans for future patients.

*Procedures:*

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to:

- Complete the BREAST-Q BCT questionnaire, which includes questions about your satisfaction with your breast surgery and your overall quality of life.
- Provide demographic information such as age, and medical history related to your breast cancer treatment.

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- This process will take approximately 20 minutes and is conducted online. If you are uncomfortable with computers, we may also conduct the survey in person or telephonically (depending on your preference)

#### *Voluntary Participation:*

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You may choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time without affecting your medical care. Even if you have provided consent, you may still decide to not participate or for your data not to be used in our research.

#### *Risks and Benefits:*

- **Risks:** There are no physical risks associated with this study. Some questions may make you feel uncomfortable, but you are free to skip any question you do not wish to answer.
- **Benefits:** There are no direct benefits to you for participating. However, the information gathered may help improve future patient care and treatment strategies.

#### *Confidentiality:*

All information collected during this study will be kept **strictly confidential**. Any identifying information will be **removed** where possible and numbers will be allocated to protect your identity. No names will be recorded. This data will only be accessible to authorised researchers and stored securely according to the **Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA)**.

#### *Contact Information:*

If you have any questions or concerns about the study, you can contact me on 0837801511 or [shaylin.pillay@wits.ac.za](mailto:shaylin.pillay@wits.ac.za). The findings of this study will be compiled

into a research report that can be accessed online via the university library website. If you have any questions, concerns, or complaints about the ethical procedures involved in this study, please feel free to reach out to the Wits University Human

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Research Ethics Committee at +27(0)11 717 1408 or via email at [hrec.medical.researchoffice@wits.ac.za](mailto:hrec.medical.researchoffice@wits.ac.za).

Thank you for considering participating in our study. Your input is invaluable in helping us improve the quality of care for future patients undergoing similar treatments. If you are happy to participate, please sign the attached consent form.

**Yours sincerely,**

**Dr Shaylin Pillay**

## Appendix B: Milpark Hospital CEO Permission Letter



Netcare Hospitals (Pty) Ltd T/A  
Netcare Milpark Hospital  
9 Guild Road, Parktown West, Johannesburg, 2193  
PO Box 91155, Auckland Park, 2006  
Tel: +27 (0) 11 480 5600  
Corporate Fax: +27 (0) 11 482 3317  
[www.netcare.co.za](http://www.netcare.co.za)

17<sup>th</sup> December 2024

### LETTER CONFIRMING KNOWLEDGE OF NON-TRIAL RESEARCH TO BE CONDUCTED IN THIS NETCARE FACILITY

***Re: "Patient Satisfaction and Quality of Life After Breast-Conserving Surgery and Intraoperative Radiotherapy in South African Breast Cancer Patients: A Cross-Sectional Study."***

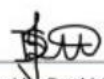
**Dear Dr Shaylin Pillay**

We hereby confirm knowledge of the above named research application to be made to the Netcare Research Operational Committee and in principle agree to the research application for Netcare Milpark Hospital, subject to the following:

1. That the data collection may not commence prior to receipt of FINAL APPROVAL from the Sustainability Committee of Netcare (Research Operational Committee).
2. A copy of the research report will be provided to Netcare Research Operational Committee once it is finally approved by the tertiary institution, or once complete.
3. Netcare has the right to implement any Best Practice recommendations from the research.
4. That the Hospital/Site/Division Management reserves the right to withdraw the approval for research at any time during the process, should the research prove to be detrimental to the subjects / Netcare or should the researcher not comply with the conditions of approval.

We wish you success in your research.

Yours faithfully

  
Signed by David Stanton  
Hospital General Manager

17/12/2024  
Date

1

Directors: R H Friedland (CEO), K N Gibson (CFO), E Bock (Managing Director: Hospital Division),  
C Grindell (Managing Director: 911) Company Secretary; C Viki Reg. No. 1996/006591/07



## Appendix C: Human Research Ethics Committee (Medical) Ethics Clearance

|                                                                                                                                               |                                              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
|  <p>UNIVERSITY OF THE<br/>WITWATERSRAND<br/>JOHANNESBURG</p> | HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS<br>COMMITTEE (MEDICAL) |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|

Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation)

**TO:** Dr S Pillay  
School of Clinical Medicine  
Department of Surgery  
Division of Plastic and Restorative Surgery  
Faculty of Health Sciences

E-mail: [say911p@gmail.com](mailto:say911p@gmail.com)

**CC:** Supervisor: Professors C-A Benn and C Sofianos; Dr B van den Berg  
<[drbennncarol@gmail.com](mailto:drbennncarol@gmail.com)>  
and <[HREC-Medical\\_Research\\_Office@wits.ac.za](mailto:HREC-Medical_Research_Office@wits.ac.za)>

**FROM:** Mr Iain Burns  
Human Research Ethics Committee (Medical)  
Tel: 011 717 1252

E-mail: [Iain.Burns@wits.ac.za](mailto:Iain.Burns@wits.ac.za)

**DATE:** 2024/12/20

**REF:** R14/49

**PROTOCOL NO:** **M241169** (This is your ethics application reference number. Please quote it in all enquiries, oral or written, relating to this study.)

**PROJECT TITLE:** *Patient satisfaction and quality of life after breast-conserving surgery and intraoperative radiotherapy in South African breast cancer patients: a cross-sectional study*

Please find attached the Clearance Certificate for the above project. I hope it goes well and that an article in a recognized publication comes out of it. This will reflect well on your professional standing and contribute to Government funding of the University.



MSWorks2000/Iain0007/Clearscan.wps

## Appendix D: Turnitin Report

| MMED Article Turnitin-1.docx |                                                                                                                                                  |              |                |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| ORIGINALITY REPORT           |                                                                                                                                                  |              |                |
| 19%                          | 11%                                                                                                                                              | 13%          | 6%             |
| SIMILARITY INDEX             | INTERNET SOURCES                                                                                                                                 | PUBLICATIONS | STUDENT PAPERS |
| PRIMARY SOURCES              |                                                                                                                                                  |              |                |
| 1                            | "2018 Annual Meeting Official Proceedings, Volume XIX", Annals of Surgical Oncology, 2018<br>Publication                                         | 3%           |                |
| 2                            | Submitted to University of Witwatersrand<br>Student Paper                                                                                        | 2%           |                |
| 3                            | www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov<br>Internet Source                                                                                                          | 2%           |                |
| 4                            | www.frontiersin.org<br>Internet Source                                                                                                           | 1%           |                |
| 5                            | Steven J. Kronowitz, John R. Benson, Maurizio B. Nava. "Oncoplastic and Reconstructive Management of the Breast", CRC Press, 2020<br>Publication | 1%           |                |
| 6                            | healthdocbox.com<br>Internet Source                                                                                                              | 1%           |                |
| 7                            | Submitted to Oxford Brookes University<br>Student Paper                                                                                          | 1%           |                |
| 8                            | Submitted to Southern New Hampshire University - Continuing Education<br>Student Paper                                                           | 1%           |                |
| 9                            | Submitted to Touro College<br>Student Paper                                                                                                      | 1%           |                |

## Appendix E: Journal Guidelines

