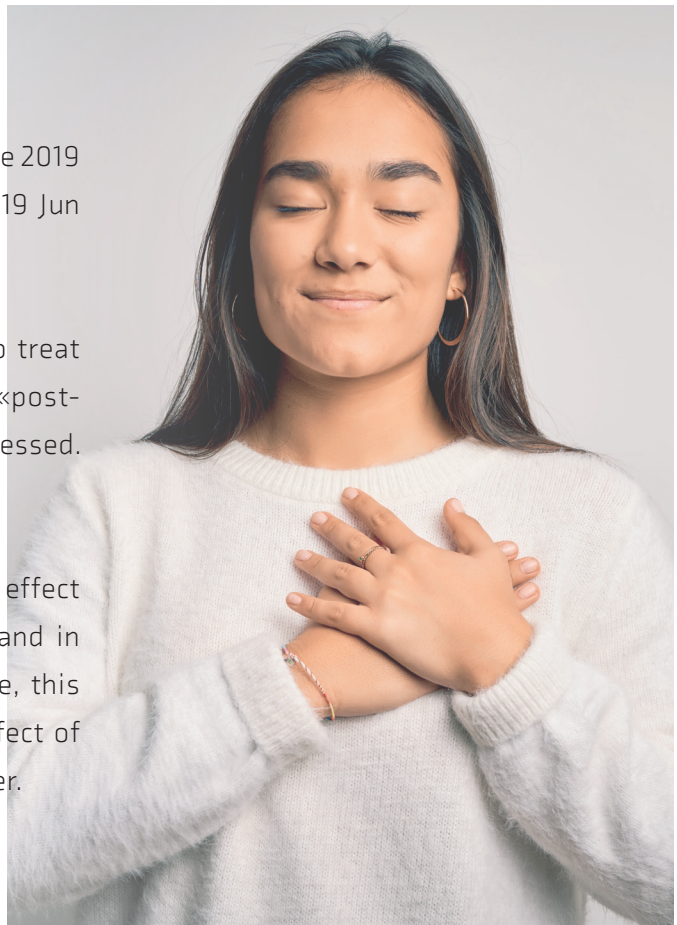


GRATITUDE IMPROVES THE LIVES OF BREAST CANCER PATIENTS

This is the conclusion of a study published in June 2019 by a Polish University team (Front Psychol. 2019 Jun 12;10:1365).

Although modern medicine has found a way to treat breast cancer, 85% of patients suffer from «post-traumatic stress» and more than 25% are depressed. This distress is not always considered...

Numerous studies demonstrate the positive effect of gratitude in coping with traumatic events and in facilitating psychological well-being. Therefore, this team of researchers wanted to examine the effect of gratitude in 42 patients treated for breast cancer.





They asked them to focus on their thoughts and feelings for 15 minutes every night and to write it down in a journal. Half of the patients had no specific instructions (control group) and the other half had the following instruction: "There are many things in our lives, both large and small, that we might be grateful about. Think back over the day and write down what you have been grateful for. You can report up to six reasons" (Gratitude Group). At the same time, both groups were asked to complete quality of life questionnaires.

At the end of 2 weeks, women in the gratitude group reported more **self-esteem, optimism and acceptance of the disease** than women in the control group. In addition, the women in the gratitude group perceived more social support from their partner or other people in their entourage. Finally, they use more coping mechanisms to deal with stress (try to be with other people, focus less on their physical symptoms, regret less what happens to them, approach the problem in different ways).

THE POWER OF **POSITIVE EMOTIONS**

Women with breast cancer have experienced a major trauma that has transformed their lives, and their level of gratitude is lower than the general population. In this study, the gratitude journal showed to be an inexpensive and effective autotherapy for women with breast cancer. The researchers suggest that positive emotions "cancel out" the consequences of negative events: *"It is possible that gratitude is an "undoer" of distress related to breast cancer treatment (...). Active expressing of gratitude might be an effective strategy to prioritize positivity and improve the quality of life of these patients"*.

SOURCE: Sztachańska J, Krejtz I, Nezlek JB. Using a Gratitude Intervention to Improve the Lives of Women With Breast Cancer: A Daily Diary Study. *Front Psychol.* 2019 June 12;10:1365. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31249544/>



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