Author's response to reviews

Title: Factors Associated with Cancer-related Fatigue in Breast Cancer Patients during Endocrine Treatment in an Urban Setting

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Author's response to reviews: see over
1. In relation to the title of the manuscript, I would suggest that it be re-worded to something similar to the following: “Factors associated with cancer-related fatigue in breast cancer patients undergoing endocrine treatment in an urban setting”

Factors associated with cancer-related fatigue in breast cancer patients during endocrine treatment in an urban setting

2. I would suggest a separate table describing the results of logistic regression in these patients. The table should describe the Odds Ratios, 95% CIs and corresponding p values for all variables that were investigated in relation to CRF.

Please see table 2.

3. Please describe the inclusion and exclusion criteria for this study?

Eligibility criteria were that participants: a) be at least 18 years of age, b) have no documented or observable psychiatric or neurological disorders that would interfere with participation, c) be women diagnosed with stage I-IIIA breast cancer, d) have no history of another cancer other than basal cell skin carcinoma, e) have no other chronic or life-threatening diseases in which fatigue is a prominent symptom (e.g., multiple sclerosis, rheumatoid arthritis, fibromyalgia, or chronic fatigue syndrome), f) have been treated surgically for breast cancer, g) have been undergoing or be undergoing endocrine therapy, h) all patients had been on endocrine therapy for more than six months, and i) provide written informed consent.

4. How was the sample size of 315 reached? How many eligible patients were seen during the indicated time interval? How many were approached to participate? And how many were finally recruited? What was the response rate?

It’s difficult to ascertain whether the sample is a convenience sample, a random sample or a case series.

Eligibility was determined by chart review and consultation with the attending physician. Recruitment strategies included interviews with women who were identified from tumor registries, referrals from clinical oncologists. One of these women was randomly selected and sent a letter of introduction. A total of 371 women were considered eligible and asked to participate, 333 accepted. Those women who provided informed consent were instructed to complete a series of questionnaires assessing factors associated with cancer-related fatigue. The 315 women responded to the questionnaire (84.9%). The remaining patients were excluded because a complete data set was not available due to inaccurate filing and missing or unavailable records.

5. What are the limitations of this study? This needs to be addressed in the discussion section. For example, some of the limitations of the study might include that it was a retrospective study design and/or a convenience study sample etc.
Limitations
Results of this study reflect the retrospective analysis of the self-report data. The likelihood of recall bias have certain limitations. For these breast cancer patients, the beginning of endocrine therapy was from 7 to 60 months previously. However, during endocrine treatment of breast cancer in women, this limitation also provides significant information, showing that the prevalence and severity of fatigue, the demographic, clinical, and lifestyle factors associated with cancer related fatigue (CRF) in breast cancer patients during endocrine treatment in an urban area.