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Original Citation

Somogyi, Ron Barry, Edward, Karen-Leigh, Baghdikian, Nairy, Stephenson, John, Webb, Angela and Morrison, Wayne (2014) Understanding the factors that influence breast reconstruction decision making in Australian women. In: Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) Annual Scientific Congress, 5th - 9th May 2014, Singapore. (Unpublished)

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Understanding the factors that influence breast reconstruction decision making in Australian women



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Only 5-30% of women receive reconstruction (12% of Australian women) following mastectomy. Few studies have looked at the reasons why women decide whether or not to have breast reconstruction. Our aim was to identify social and demographic factors that influence Australian women's decision to have breast reconstruction.

Methods

- Online survey sent to breast cancer patients through Breast Cancer Network Australia
 - ✓ See Figure 1
- Multiple Regression Model to identify influential decision making factors

Results

- 501 mastectomy patients completed survey
 - 309 (65%) underwent reconstruction
 - 45% Implant based, 44% Tissue Transfer, 11% Both
- Factors that positively influenced the likelihood of breast reconstruction included bilateral mastectomy, younger age, lower home/work responsibilities and the influence of the plastic-reconstructive surgeon
 - ✓ See Table 1 for full descriptive statistics

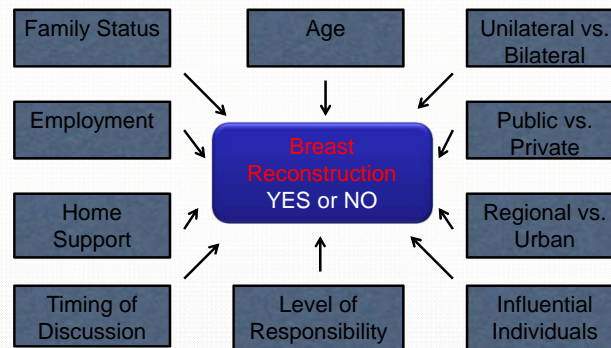


Figure 1 – Factors collected in the Survey

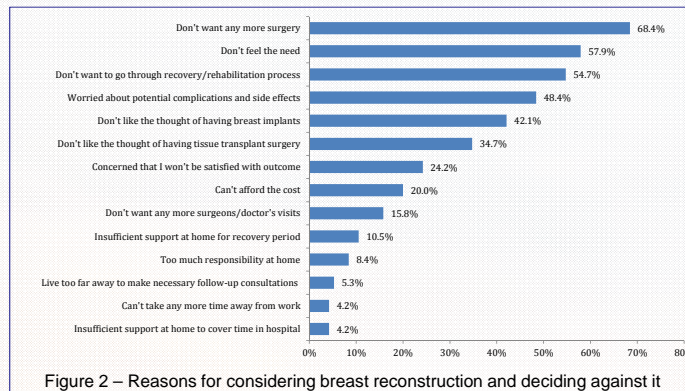


Figure 2 – Reasons for considering breast reconstruction and deciding against it

Variable*	All patients (n=501)	Patients undergoing reconstruction (n=308)	p-value
Mastectomy			
Unilateral	323 (64.5%)	181 (56.0%)	0.001
Bilateral	178 (35.5%)	127 (71.3%)	
Hospital type			
Private	351 (70.1%)	228 (65.0%)	0.058
Public	150 (29.9%)	80 (53.3%)	
Hospital location			
Regional	105 (21.0%)	54 (51.4%)	0.082
Urban	396 (79.0%)	254 (64.1%)	
Family status			
No children living at home	231 (46.1%)	126 (54.5%)	0.592
Children living at home	270 (53.9%)	182 (67.4%)	
Employment status			
Not employed full- or part-time	98 (19.6%)	54 (55.1%)	0.634
Employed full- or part-time	403 (80.4%)	254 (63.0%)	
Timing of reconstruction discussion			
No discussion before surgery	195 (38.9%)	103 (52.8%)	0.156
Discussion before surgery	306 (61.1%)	205 (67.0%)	
Age at surgery (years): mean (SD)	48.9 (9.1)	47.7 (9.0)	0.046
Level of home/work responsibilities: median (IQR)	4 (3-5)	4 (3-5)	0.042
Level of home support: median (IQR)	4 (3-5)	4 (4-5)	0.293
Effect of breast surgeon: mean (SD)	6.51 (3.34)	6.92 (3.10)	0.823
Effect of plastic surgeon: mean (SD)	7.21 (3.40)	8.10 (2.71)	<0.001
Effect of breast care nurse: mean (SD)	4.70 (3.46)	4.82 (3.51)	0.111
Effect of family & friends: mean (SD)	4.75 (3.17)	4.94 (3.07)	0.575

Table 1 – Patient data comparing those who underwent reconstruction with those who did not

Conclusions

- Our study demonstrates that social and demographic data can be gathered easily from breast cancer patients and that these factors may significantly influence their decision to undergo breast reconstruction
- This data is important to allow breast cancer patients to make informed and effective decisions about their care