

ABSTRACT

Women with gynecologic cancer (n=57) and women with benign gynecologic disease (n=49) were assessed prior to, and then reassessed at 1-8 weeks and at 1 year follow-up after the operation. The psychosexual functioning and adjustment of women diagnosed with cancer were compared with their counterparts, longitudinally. Women with cancer had lower levels of sexual drive, higher levels of sexual fantasy, lower degrees of body image dissatisfaction than women in the benign group. There were no significant group differences in psychosexual adjustment, including the resumption of intercourse, kissing and petting, and sexual fantasies, at 1 year follow-up. However, the cancer group had more sexual problems than the benign group did. Time effects on psychosexual functioning of hysterectomized women were examined by combining the two groups as a whole. Results showed that women experienced fewer physical symptoms and less psychological disturbances, were less neurotic and more feminine, and had higher level of body image dissatisfaction after the operation. With regard to their sexual life, the levels of sexual drive were decreased after surgery, but elevated at 1 year follow-up, though not returned to the pre-operative level. Regression analyses manifested the following predictors: age was a significant predictor for the resumption of kissing and petting, follow-up level of sexual satisfaction and folk belief were factors in the time needed to resume kissing and petting, and pre-operation level of sexual drive impacted the time needed to resume intercourse.

Future studies should place more emphasis on how the cultural factor affects the sexual behavior of women. Provision of sexual counseling to both patients and partners is suggested.