

# Cancer-related PTS linked to very limited cognitive impairment among newly diagnosed breast cancer patients

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Cancer-related post-traumatic stress is associated with very limited cognitive impairment before treatment among newly diagnosed breast cancer patients, according to a new study published April 16 in the *JNCI: Journal of the National Cancer Institute*.

Pretreatment [cognitive impairment](#) and symptoms of [post-traumatic stress disorder](#) have been independently reported among cancer patients. Post-traumatic stress has also been linked to cognitive impairment. However, a clear relationship between post-traumatic stress in the setting of a cancer diagnosis and cognitive impairment before treatment has not been reported. To investigate this relationship, Kerstin Hermelink, Dipl.-Psych., Ph.D., from the Breast Center, Department of Gynecology and Obstetrics, at the CCCLMU University Hospital of Munich, in Munich, Germany, and colleagues, analyzed data from 166 breast cancer patients and 60 matched controls. Data from computerized and traditional neuropsychological testing, assessments of stress disorders, and self-reported measures of cognitive function and depression were collected prior to systemic or local treatment. They report very limited cognitive impairment was observed among newly diagnosed but untreated [breast cancer patients](#), and was largely attributable to post-traumatic stress related to knowledge of the new cancer diagnosis.

The authors conclude, "Future research that comprehensively investigates the consequences of stress may even more fully explain the

particular vulnerability of cognitive function in pretreatment cancer patients."

**More information:** *JNCI J Natl Cancer Inst* (2015) 107(7): djv099.  
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