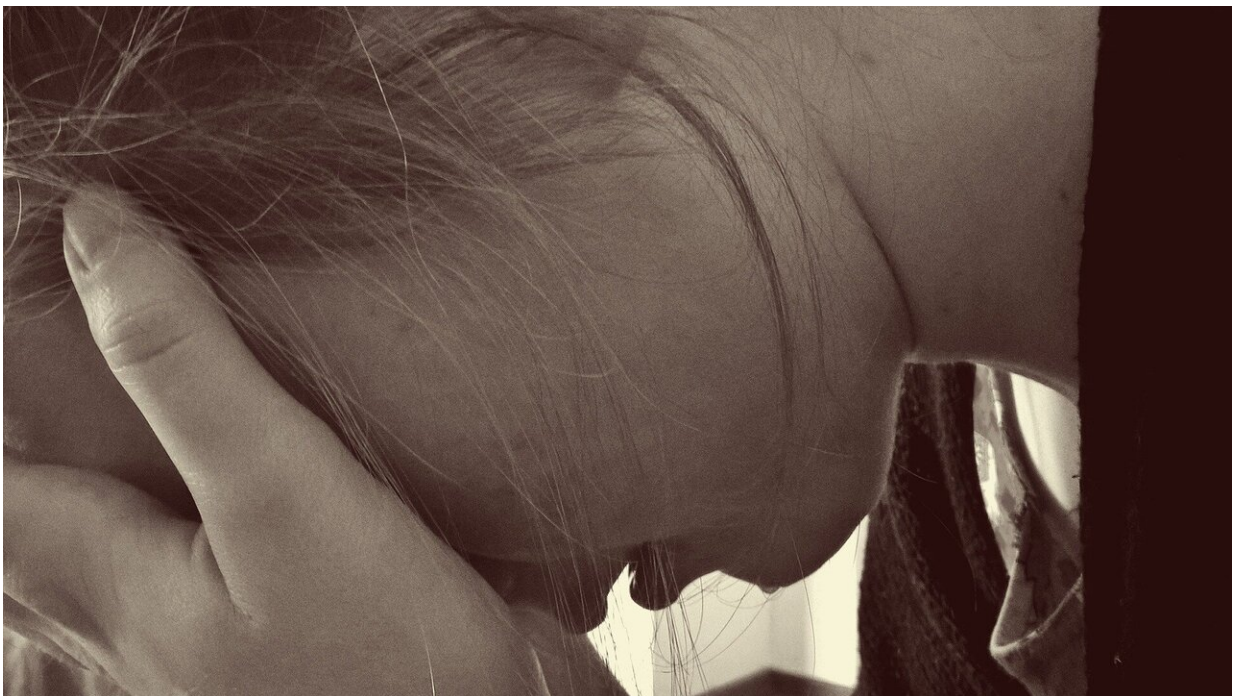


# **New study highlights the link between depression and breast cancer mortality in women**

April 8 2024

---



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

A new study presented at the [European Psychiatric Association Congress](#)

2024 sheds light on the significant impact of depression on the survival rates and quality of life for women diagnosed with breast cancer. This study, conducted by a team of researchers in Russia, conducted a comprehensive analysis of existing research on the prevalence and impact of depression in breast cancer patients.

Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women and a leading cause of death globally and in the EU, it is estimated that one in 11 women in the EU-27 will develop breast cancer before the age of 74. The psychological impact of breast cancer is well documented and previous studies have estimated that, globally, 32% of breast cancer sufferers also live with depression. Despite the improvements in screening, diagnostics and treatment of breast cancer, patients are still not properly screened for [mental health conditions](#) and often do not receive adequate support.

Key findings from the study include:

- The study found a wide range in the reported prevalence of depression among breast cancer patients, varying from 4.5% to 38% across different studies.
- The research highlights a significant correlation between depression and mortality, with studies indicating:
  - 50% increased risk of all-cause mortality in patients with depression compared to non-depressed patients with stage I-III breast cancer.
  - 2–2.5-fold increase in breast cancer-specific and all-cause mortality in patients with early-stage (stage I & II) cancer and depression.
  - 2.5 times greater risk of death within 8–15 years for women with non-metastatic breast cancer and mild to

moderate depressive symptoms after surgery compared to those with minimal or no [depressive symptoms](#).

- Overall, the study concludes that both depression and anxiety can negatively impact [survival rates](#) and reduce the quality of life for breast cancer patients.

Dr. Ruslan A. Starostin, oncologist and breast surgeon at Druzhkov Clinic LLC, Kazan, Russia, said, "Cancer, depression and [anxiety disorders](#) are closely interrelated. Our task is therefore to identify the presence of mental disorders in patients at the time of initial breast cancer diagnosis in order to begin treatment as early as possible, because the quality of life and overall survival of patients is extremely important."

Svetlana V. Kuzmina, Professor of Psychiatry in the Department of Psychiatry and Medical Psychology at Kazan State Medical University in Kazan, Russia, said, "The mental health of breast cancer patients warrants such attention as malignant disease can have a negative impact on mental well-being, treatment adherence and quality of life. In the context of our investigation, we also hope to reduce the burden of disease on the daily lives of patients and their environment."

Ilgiz G. Gataullin, Professor of the Department of Oncology, Radiology and Palliative Medicine of the Kazan State Medical Academy, Russia further added, "There are still no universal methods for the screening of this mental health condition. It is likely that psychotherapy and antidepressant treatment may reduce the risk of psychological distress, but further research in this area is needed."

"These findings underscore the crucial need for routine depression screening for breast cancer patients at the time of diagnosis, integrated approach to treatment that includes the involvement of mental health professions and, most importantly, increased awareness about the impact

of [breast cancer](#) on mental health and the need for [open communication](#) alongside [early intervention](#)," explains Dr. Julian Beezhold, the Secretary General of the European Psychiatric Association.

Provided by European Psychiatric Association

Citation: New study highlights the link between depression and breast cancer mortality in women (2024, April 8) retrieved 21 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2024-04-highlights-link-depression-breast-cancer.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--