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# Body Representations of Mexican Women, when they performing Screening, Treatment, and Rehabilitation for Breast Cancer. Qualitative Study

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## Background

Destigmatizing cancer should imply some women's analysis of experience and know how they represent their body, both subjectivity and social imaginary, since the representation of breast cancer affects women's quality of life.

The **objective** on this research was to analyze the representation of the body with cancer in women when performing screen studies, those who are being treated for breast cancer and those seeking breast reconstructions

## Method

A quality study was designed through a free listing techniques (Bogarty & Halguin, 2010), to analyze the social representation of "body with cancer".

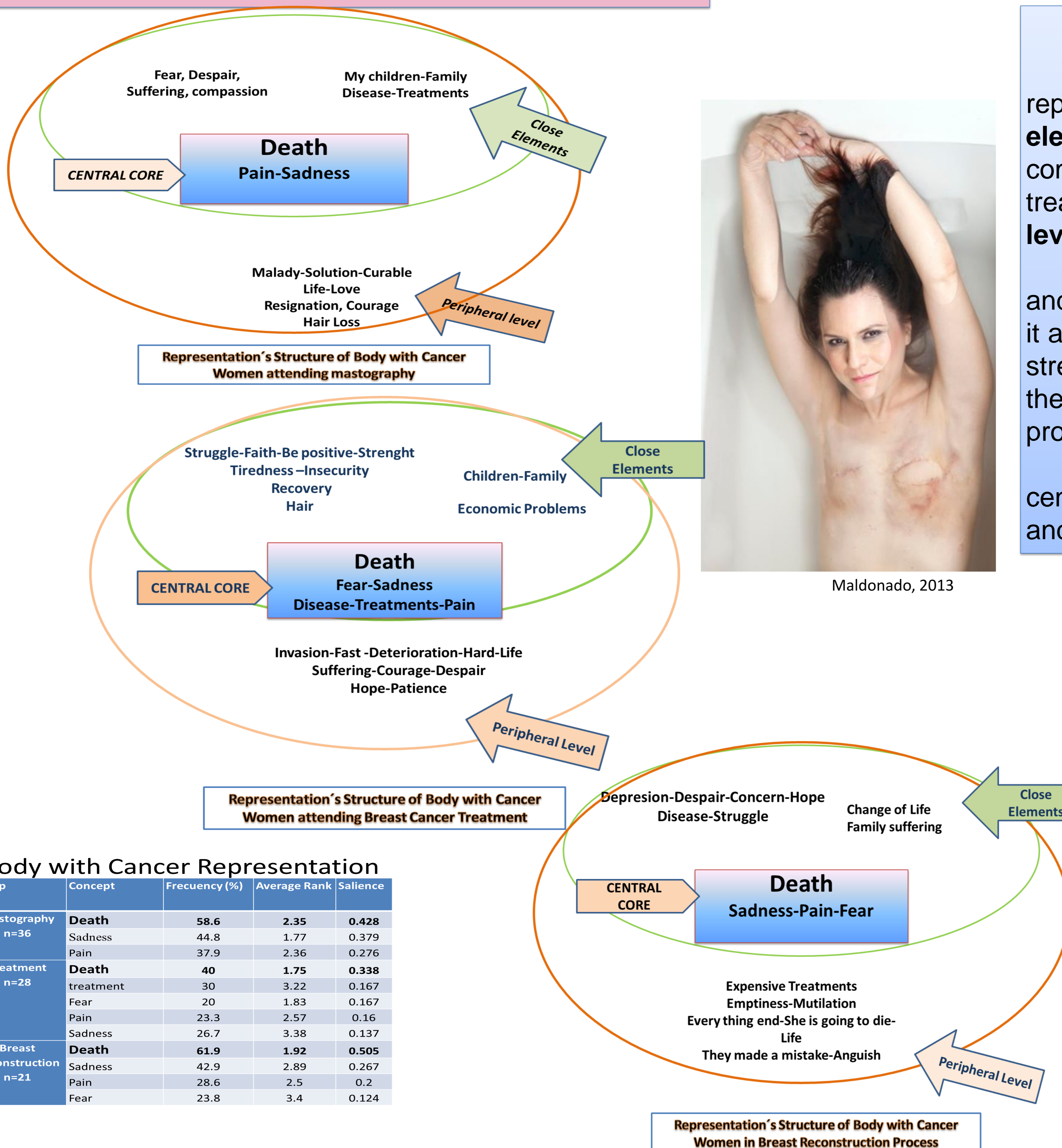
A convenience sample was of 30 women diagnosed with breast cancer, 28 under treatment and 21 in breast reconstruction process, underserved in public health institutions of Tepic, Nayarit and Guadalajara, Jalisco, México. The frequency and percentage of commonality "body with cancer" in the elicited terms was obtained.

## Results

**Screening group:** Central core of representation: death, pain and sadness; **close elements:** fear, suffering, despair and compassion, also concern for their families and treatments derived from the disease. **Peripheral level:** curable disease.

In **women in treatment** at the core are pain and death. Body experiences fatigue and wear; it appears uncertainty, but full compelled to have strength they fight for recovery but, inside them there are courage and desperate for economic problems.

During **breast reconstruction**, continues its centrally imaginary as death, sadness, pain, and fear. Thoughts of mutilation appears.



Maldonado, 2013

## Body with Cancer Representation

Group	Concept	Frecuency (%)	Average Rank	Sallience
Mastography n=36	Death	58.6	2.35	0.428
	Sadness	44.8	1.77	0.379
	Pain	37.9	2.36	0.276
Treatment n=28	Death	40	1.75	0.338
	treatment	30	3.22	0.167
	Fear	20	1.83	0.167
	Pain	23.3	2.57	0.16
Breast Reconstruction n=21	Death	61.9	1.92	0.505
	Sadness	42.9	2.89	0.267
	Pain	28.6	2.5	0.2
	Fear	23.8	3.4	0.124

## Clinical implications

Despite interventions with fighting attitude, emotional distress persists because the symbolism of cancer as Death and negative body representations.

Psycho-oncology interventions should consider social representations of death, fear, sadness and pain in treatment of breast cancer in women, keeping in mind the body image derived of cultural interaction affecting psychosocial aspects of women having or not having breast cancer.

## References

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