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## Social cognition impairments in women with breast cancer

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**Statement of the Problem:** Previous studies have reported basic cognition impairments in patients with breast cancer. However, no studies have assessed social cognition abilities in patients with breast cancer. The aim of this study was to assess social cognition abilities (i.e., basic emotion recognition, moral emotions recognition, theory of mind and empathy) in women with breast cancer, compared to a control.

**Methodology:** We also assessed basic cognition abilities as well as several socio-emotional factors (i.e., depression, anxiety, quality of life). Sixteen women with breast cancer and sixteen healthy women matched by age and educational level participated in this study. Women with breast cancer were in initial stages of hormonal or chemotherapy treatments.

**Findings:** Results showed that women with breast cancer exhibited a lower performance than controls in moral emotions recognition and theory of mind tasks. Impairments in these domains were associated with higher levels of anxiety and lower perceived quality of life in women with breast cancer. No differences between groups were found in basic cognition abilities.

**Conclusion & Significance:** This is the first study in assessing social cognition abilities in women with breast cancer. Our results suggest that social cognition domains may be considered in the cognitive assessment of patients with breast cancer as well as in the design of non-pharmacologic strategies. Future studies should investigate whether these social cognition changes are associated with treatment effects.

## Biography

Sandra Baez is professor of Psychology and Neuroscience at Los Andes University. She holds a degree in Psychology, a Master in Neuropsychology, and a Ph.D. in Psychology. She conducted her postdoctoral and received training in functional and structural neuroimaging at the Max Planck Institute for Human Cognitive and Brain Sciences. She has experience in neuropsychological assessment and cognitive stimulation techniques for patients with neurological and psychiatric disorders. Her interests and research experience are focused on neuropsychological aspects as well as neurophysiological and neuroanatomical correlates of social cognition domains in patients with neuropsychiatric disorders. She has more than 50 publications in leading journals, such as Nature Human Behavior, Neurology, Brain, JAMA Neurology, among others. She is associate Editor of Journal of Alzheimer's Disease and Frontiers in Psychiatry, and ad hoc Reviewer for more than 20 journals. She is also part of the Project team taskforce of the Human Affectome Project.

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