

Fear of Progression in Patients with Benign Breast Tumors During the Perioperative Period: A Mixed Methods Review

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Abstract

Fear of progression (FoP) refers to an individual's apprehension regarding the symptoms of their disease itself, as well as anxiety about potential deterioration, loss of control, or life-threatening progression of the condition. This psychological symptom is most commonly observed among patients with chronic diseases. However, existing research has predominantly focused on malignant tumors such as breast cancer, while studies on FoP in patients with benign tumors remain relatively scarce, with a particular lack of in-depth exploration into their subjective experiences. The perioperative period represents a critical transitional phase from diagnosis to postoperative recovery, during which patients not only face physiological stressors—including surgical trauma, pain, and body image changes—but also bear the complex psychological burden associated with concerns about disease nature, surgical outcomes, and future health. Despite the benign pathological nature of their condition, patients continue to experience significant psychological distress throughout the perioperative period. Mixed methods research (MMR), which integrates quantitative and qualitative data, provides a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the current status, subjective experiences, and causal attributions of FoP, thereby overcoming the limitations inherent in single-method approaches. This review adopts a mixed methods research perspective to systematically synthesize the epidemiological prevalence, subjective experiential characteristics, attributional patterns, and influencing factors of FoP among patients with benign breast tumors during the perioperative period, with the goal of establishing a theoretical foundation for the development of precision-oriented psychological intervention strategies.

Keywords

Benign Breast Tumors, Fear of Progression, Perioperative Period, Mixed Methods Research, Measurement Tools