Health-Related Quality of Life and Work Impairment Among Individuals Living with HER2+ Breast Cancer with Brain Metastases

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BACKGROUND
- About 1 in 5 people diagnosed with breast cancer (BC) will be considered HER2+,1 and nearly half of those diagnosed with HER2+ BC develop brain metastases.2 Brain metastases increase the risk of impairments, faster disease progression, and shorter survival time.3
- Despite the significant burden faced by people with HER2+ BC living with brain metastases (BMBC), there is little research available characterizing the unique experiences of this community.

AIMS
1. Examine the feasibility of recruiting individuals currently living with HER2+ BMBC to complete an online survey.
2. Describe participants’ health-related quality of life (HRQOL) and experiences with work impairment.

METHODS
In this observational, cross-sectional study, 62 women living with HER2+ metastatic BC were recruited via advocacy partners, Living Beyond Breast Cancer and Metastatic Breast Cancer Alliance, and completed an online survey in January 2022. Participants answered questions about:
- Sociodemographic and clinical history, including history of brain metastases
- Current caregiving support received
- Physical health (PROMIS Global Physical Health 2av1.2)
- HRQOL (PROMIS-29v2.0 & PROMIS Cognitive Function 8a)
- Work impairment (WPAI-SHPv2.0)

Descriptive statistics were calculated for study variables; PROMIS measures were converted to T scores (M=50, SD=10), enabling comparisons to established population benchmarks.

RESULTS
- 70% of participants experienced moderate to severe impairments in all eight HRQOL facets.
- Frequency of Caregiver Support Received: 60% 39-74%
- Work Impairment:
  - Mean: 37% 14-74%
  - % Reduced Productivity while Working: 39% 0-80%
  - % Overall Work Impairment: 60% 39-95%

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS
- Participants living with HER2+ BMBC experienced substantial emotional, physical, social, and cognitive quality of life impairments, high work absenteeism, reduced productivity, and overall work impairment, suggesting significant unmet needs.
- Participant recruitment efforts were successful through advocacy partnerships, suggesting high feasibility of future research with larger communities of individuals living with HER2+ breast cancer with brain metastases.
- Despite the small sample size, our descriptive results indicate a clear need for supportive care programs that leverage collaborative efforts between community-based advocacy organizations and healthcare professionals to address the health-related quality of life and work impairments experienced by those living with HER2+ BMCC.

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REFERENCES