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Title: Influence of exercise activity on quality of life in long-term breast cancer survivors.

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BACKGROUND: Behavioral and lifestyle factors may influence quality of life (QOL) outcomes in breast cancer survivors. **METHODS:** Information on QOL (Short Form-36, SF-36), lifestyle and survivorship was collected during telephone interviews with 374 breast cancer patients, diagnosed between 1983 and 1988 at ages 40 years or younger and interviewed, on average 13.2 years following diagnosis. These women previously participated in a case-control study soon after their diagnoses, providing information on breast cancer risk factors including exercise activity. We examined the impact of changes in exercise activity (comparing pre- to post-diagnosis levels) on the SF-36 mental and physical health summary scales using regression analyses.

RESULTS: A positive change in exercise activity was associated with a higher score on the SF-36 physical health summary scale at follow-up ($p = 0.005$). Change in exercise activity was not associated with the SF-36 mental health summary scale score. Patients who increased their activity levels did not differ from those who did not in terms of medical or demographic characteristics. **CONCLUSION:** This study provides one of the longest follow-up periods of breast cancer survivors to date among studies that focus on QOL and is unique in its focus on women diagnosed at a young age. Our results confirm high levels of functioning and well-being among long-term survivors and indicate that women whose exercise activity increased following diagnosis score higher on the SF-36 physical health summary scale. These findings suggest a potential role for exercise activity in maintaining well-being after a cancer diagnosis.