Purpose

To assess breast cancer (BC) patients’ knowledge and perception of fertility risks and preservation

Materials and Methods

Survey using 29-item questionnaire assessing their personal experience and knowledge about fertility risks and FP treatments. A knowledge score (0-12) was calculated with 1 point awarded for each correct answer.

Cross-sectional study

Results

- Mean age was 34 years old.
- 37 patients had a college degree.
- Eighty percent of patients were married.
- Previous pregnancy/live birth were reported in 77/72% of patients
- Mean knowledge score was 6.
- Forty-six percent of patients believed that FP treatment is related to an increased risk of cancer recurrence.
- Only 61.4% of patients were aware that freeze eggs remain available in the future whenever the patient is ready to use them.
- Most of the patients (81.4%) were aware that having a spouse was not a prerequisite for FP treatment.
- Knowledge about FP treatments availability and costs was poor with more than half of patients overestimating costs and assuming the lack of FP treatment options.
- Only 60% of patients were aware of an operational legal framework for FP in Tunisia.

Reasons for skipping FP treatment

- Lack of pregnancy desire
- Insufficient provided information
- Complexity of FP procedure
- Fear of delaying cancer treatment
- Financial difficulties
- Other reasons

Conclusion

- This study showed that FP baseline knowledge in BC patients is generally poor.
- Patient’s access to clear and concise fertility information is the key for an effective intervention for fertility preservation.