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Psychological features of breast cancer in Mexican women

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Breast cancer (BC) is one of the oncological diseases most frequently diagnosed in adult women worldwide. As with other cancer types, BC is thought to emerge after genetically susceptible stem epithelial cells display uncontrolled proliferation after being chronically exposed to stressful environmental conditions that may include altered hormonal profiles, metabolic status and/or surrounding environmental settings. This scenario, nonetheless, fails to recognize the role that psychological factors play on BC origin, progression and outcome. We study if some psychological traits may predispose Mexican women to develop BC and also explore the “relative weight” that emotional suppression and repression and stress symptoms have on the likelihood of women developing BC by establishing, through network analyses, the way these psychological traits interact with well accepted BC-risk environmental, genetic and physiological factors. Our results indicated that women diagnosed with benign or malign breast pathology share low restraint, low global stress symptoms, low physical stress symptoms, low restraint-defensiveness composite and high distress before diagnosis. This outcome was independent of the educational level, as well as of family, reproductive and nutritional histories, supporting that the weight of the psychological

traits is greater than that of the latter variables, at least in our sample. Also, the results show that the psychological traits, as expected, adopt a network organization, in which BC patients had the most disconnected distribution, followed by the benign breast pathology (BBP) group. Breast pathology according to the resulting network seems to disconnect emotions from the stress response. Additionally, the variance found between groups can only be explained by psychological traits, that is, in this sample only certain psychological traits increase the susceptibility to BC but none of the most recognized clinical factors do.

Speaker Biography

Tania Romo-González is a pharmaceutical biologist by the Universidad Veracruzana (UV), with a Doctorate (Honorary Mention) in basic biomedical research from the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), a postdoctoral stay at the Biomedical Research Institute, UNAM, period 2012-2013. She has been an associate professor in the master in neuroethology and full professor at the Faculty of Biology of the Universidad Veracruzana. Her areas of interest are psychoneuroimmunology, health-disease processes, prevention of drug use. She has directed thesis at the bachelor's and master's level. She is National Researcher Level I of the National System of Researchers (SNI) 2013-2015. Professor with desirable profile PROMEP. 2012-2015. She has published articles in national and international journals, as well as book chapters in national publishers.

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