Patients with breast cancer often participate in activities such as make-up workshops, mindfulness or exercise classes that help them cope with disease and treatment, while reducing symptoms of stress. As well as improving general well-being there is some laboratory evidence that reducing stress cortisol levels may impact on cancer cell proliferation and perhaps improve treatment outcomes. Psychological well-being can be assessed with questionnaires. Some biological changes can be measured through saliva or hair.

**Aims**

The primary aim of PEPsIN is to assess the feasibility and acceptability of using psychological and biological measures in the evaluation of a stress reduction programme within the breast cancer setting. As a secondary aim we will assess changes in psychological and biological wellbeing.

**Recruitment**

- 40 women with early stage breast cancer about to start either:
  - Supportive exercise programme tailored to people with cancer or ‘Look Good Feel Better’ workshop teaching women about skin care and make up during and after cancer treatment

**Methods**

- Recruitment will be via Participant Identification Centres (PICs)
- Participants will complete PROs and provide biological samples over 12 weeks (see flow chart)

**Measurements**

- Psychological Wellbeing
  - FACT-B
  - Perceived Stress Scale
  - Body Image Scale
  - Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale
  - Completed at baseline, day of intervention, 6 and 12 weeks follow up

**Analysis**

All questionnaires returned to SHORE-C will be analysed for changes in well being as well as correlation with stress cortisol levels.

The end of study interview will inform potential future studies and measures.

Biological samples returned directly to the University of Brighton

- Saliva and hair analysed for any changes in cortisol levels by Enzyme Immune Assay
- Saliva may also be used to measure pro-inflammatory and anti-inflammatory cytokines using ELISA

Estimates of non-adherence and completion rates will be generated to inform power calculations for future studies.

**Next Steps**

Plans for a future study to be determined including the types of measures that may be used based on patient feedback.

**Ethics Statement**

PEPSIN was reviewed and approved by the Brighton and Sussex Medical School Research Governance Committee along with the Health Resource Authority and the South Central - Berkshire Research Ethics Committee (17/SC/0170)

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