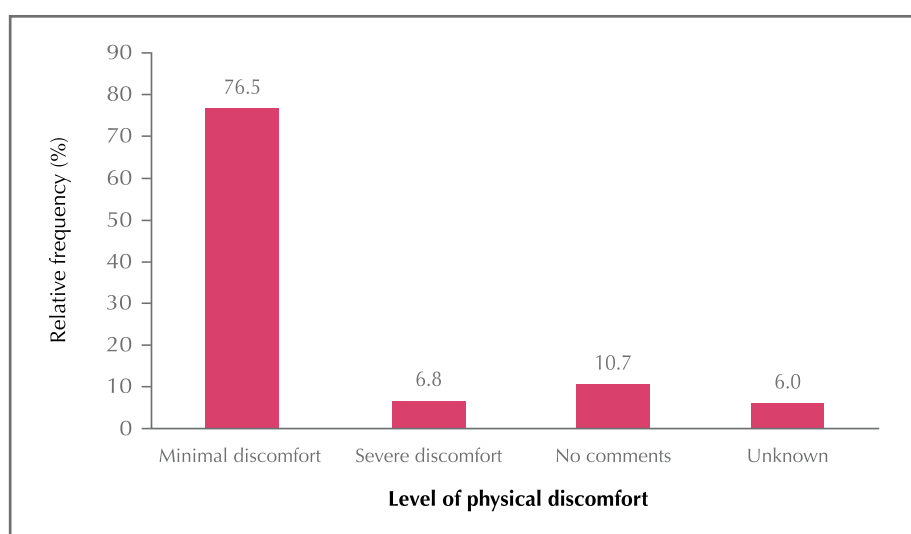




Physical discomfort after complementary and alternative therapies

76.5% of patients reported minimal physical discomfort after complementary and alternative therapies. 6.8% reported severe discomfort after taking alternative therapies (Figure 3.1.8).

Figure 3.1.8 Level of physical discomfort after complementary and alternative therapies (N=1,162)



3.2 Psychosocial impacts and adjustments after diagnosis and treatment

Psychosocial impacts of breast cancer

Over 50% of patients reported acceptance with a positive or calm attitude as a means of fighting their affliction. 26% said they felt depressed when they were first informed of their diagnosis. 18.6% reported they could not accept that they had breast cancer and 3.7% accepted the diagnosis with anger or resentment (Table 3.2.1).

Feelings after breast cancer treatment

After the patients completed their treatments, only 7.5% felt that life was not fair; 26.1% felt the cancer was an alarm which caught them by surprise; 15.6% felt that cancer took something away from them and 50.7% felt that cancer changed their value system (Table 3.2.1).

Changes in outlook and self-image

Half of the patients reported a positive change in outlook; 6.2% reported a negative change and 43.8% reported no change in outlook. 30.6% reported a positive change in self-image; 9.0% reported a negative change in self-image and 60.4% reported no change in self-image (Table 3.2.1).

Table 3.2.1 Psychosocial impacts of breast cancer on patients

	Number	(%)
Feelings at time of breast cancer diagnosis (N=3,266)		
Acceptance and positive attitude to fight	945	(28.9%)
Calm acceptance	744	(22.8%)
Acceptance with depression	848	(26.0%)
Lack of acceptance (it cannot be true)	609	(18.6%)
Acceptance with anger (something must be wrong)	120	(3.7%)
Feelings after breast cancer treatment (N=2,889)		
Life is not fair	216	(7.5%)
Cancer was an alarm that caught patient by surprise	755	(26.1%)
Cancer took something away from patient	452	(15.6%)
Cancer changed patient's value system	1,466	(50.7%)
Change in outlook (N=3,321)		
Positive	1,660	(50.0%)
Negative	207	(6.2%)
No change	1,454	(43.8%)
Change in self-image (N=3,323)		
Positive	1,017	(30.6%)
Negative	300	(9.0%)
No change	2,006	(60.4%)

Positive changes in outlook were highest in the youngest age group and lowest in the oldest age group (75.7% in the age group of 20-29 vs. 16.3% in the age group of 70-79). The proportion of patients with no change in outlook increased with age (24.3% in the age group of 20-29 vs. 76.0% in the age group of 70-79). The proportion of patients with negative changes in outlook was modest across all age groups, ranging from 0% to 7.8% (Figure 3.2.1). Patterns of change in outlook did not vary at different stages of cancer (Figure 3.2.2).

Figure 3.2.1 Change in outlook by age group (N=3,310)

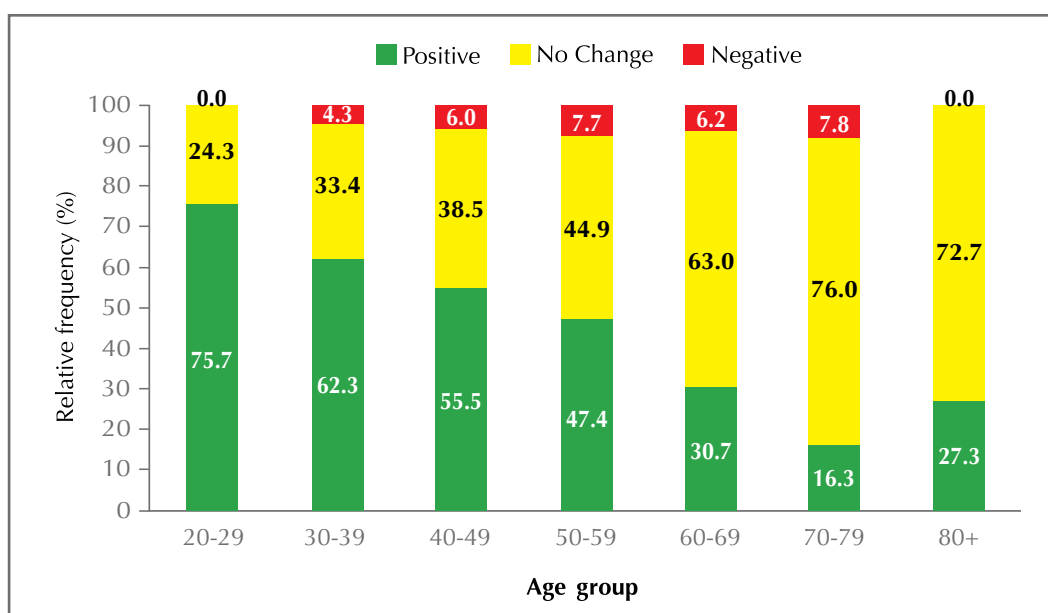
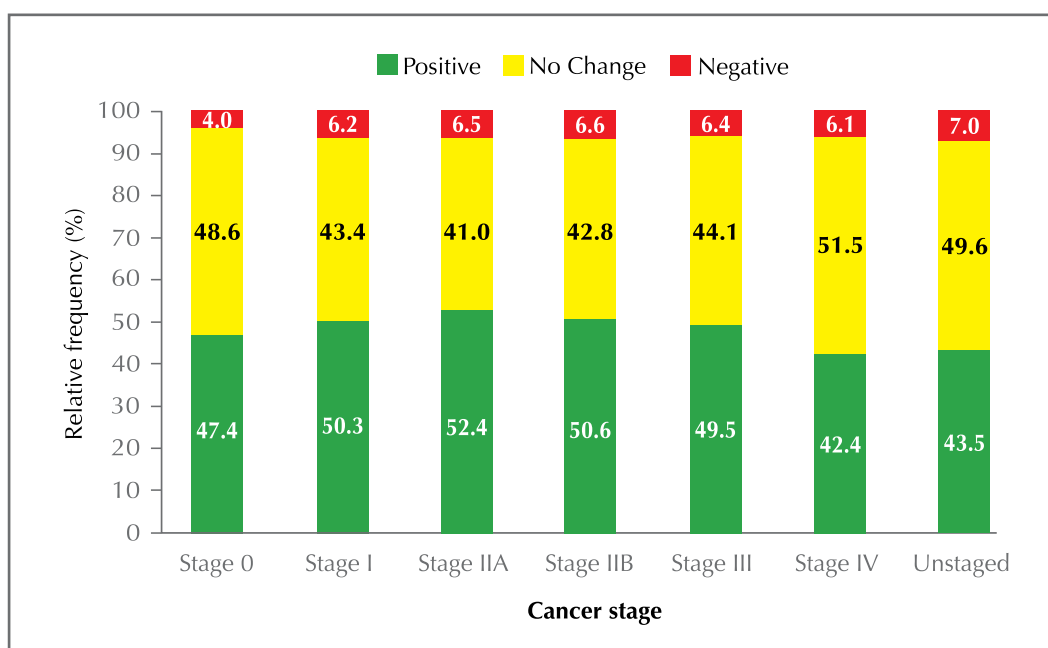
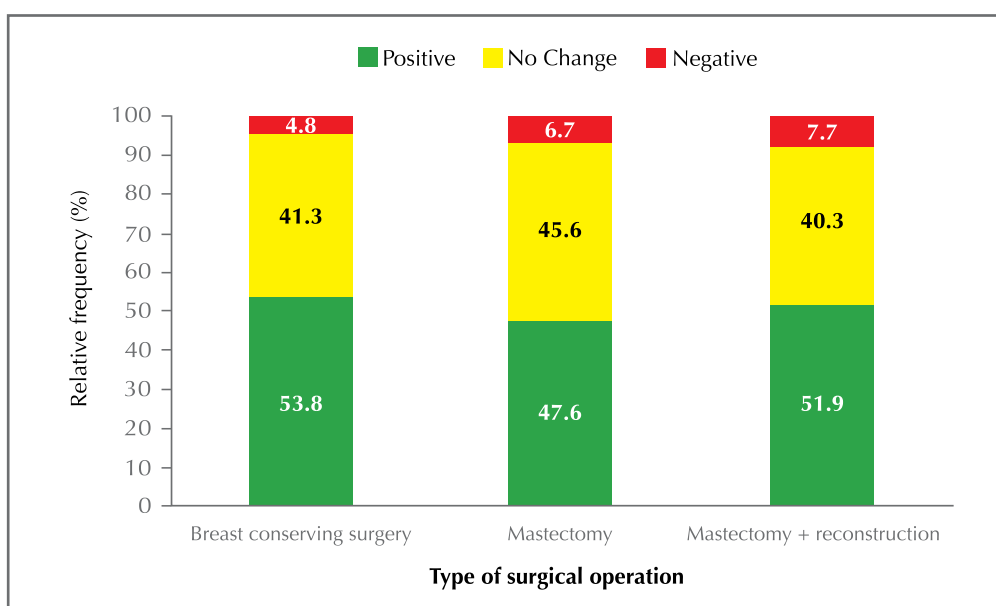


Figure 3.2.2 Change in outlook by cancer stage (N=3,347)



Fewer patients who received breast conserving surgery (4.8%) or mastectomy (6.7%) had negative changes in outlook, compared with patients who received mastectomy with reconstruction (7.7%) (Figure 3.2.3).

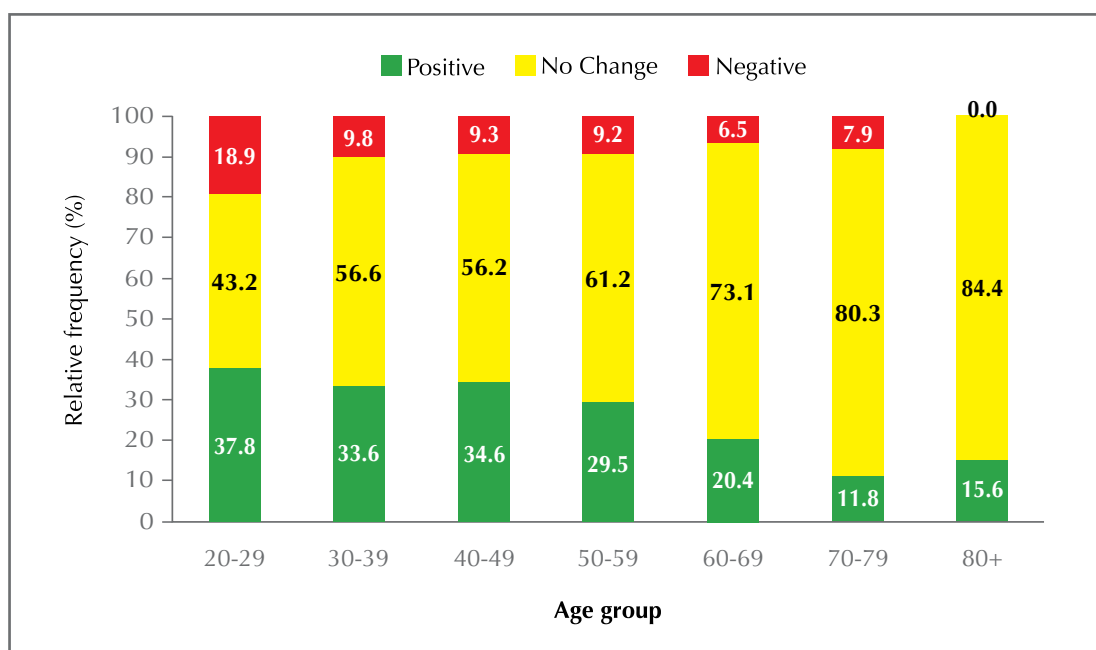
Figure 3.2.3 Change in outlook by types of surgical treatment (N=3,347)



More people in the younger age groups had positive changes in self-image, compared with the older age groups. The proportion of those whose self-image remained unchanged increased with age. The age group of 20-29 also had the highest proportion of patients with negative changes in self-image (Figure 3.2.4).

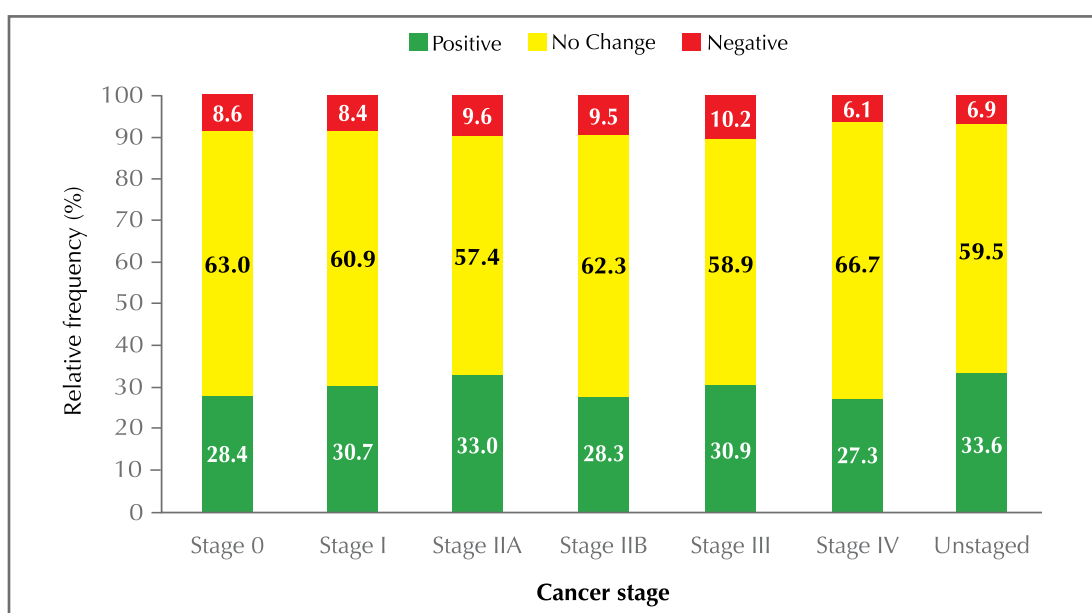


Figure 3.2.4 Change in self-image by age group (N=3,314)



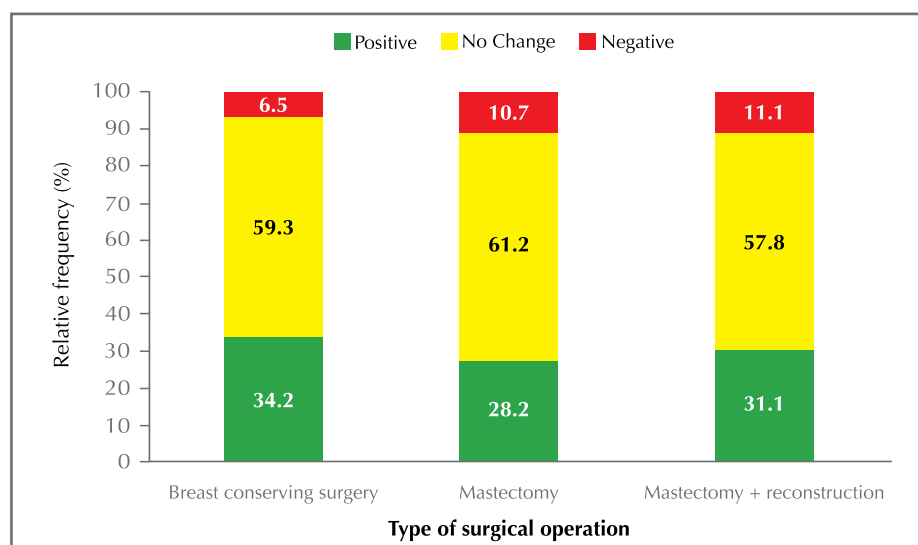
The proportion of patients who experienced positive changes or no change in self-image did not vary greatly at different cancer stages (0-IV). The proportion of those with negative changes in self-image varied from 6.1% to 10.2% among patients at all cancer stages (0-IV) (Figure 3.2.5).

Figure 3.2.5 Change in self-image by cancer stage (N=3,413)



The proportion of patients who reported positive changes or no change in self-image did not vary greatly according to the type of surgical treatment they received. The rate of negative changes in self-image was higher in patients who received mastectomy followed by reconstruction (11.1%), compared with patients who received breast conserving surgery (6.5%) or mastectomy (10.7%) (Figure 3.2.6).

Figure 3.2.6 Change in self-image by types of surgical treatment (N=3,349)





Psychosocial adjustments and coping strategies

Of the 3,375 patient cohort, 2,559 (75.8%) reported lifestyle modifications after breast cancer diagnosis. The majority (44.7%) said they exercised more. About 50% of patients said they talked with family or friends as a way of managing their negative emotions (Table 3.2.2).

Table 3.2.2 Psychosocial adjustments and coping strategies for survival

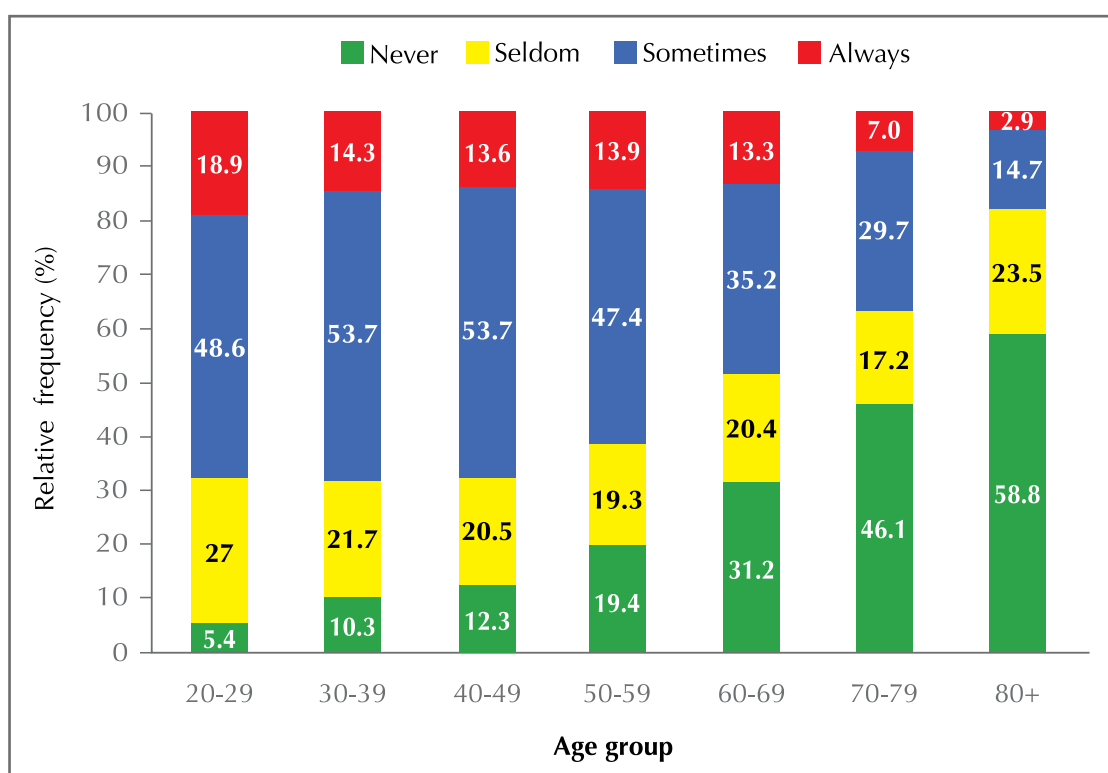
		Number	(%)
Types of lifestyle changes			
Exercising more		1,507	(44.7%)
Taking health supplements		703	(20.8%)
Changing diet		1,747	(51.8%)
Quitting job		324	(9.6%)
Reducing workload		576	(17.1%)
Ways of managing negative emotions			
Talking about them		1,692	(50.1%)
Diverting attention from them		951	(28.2%)
Ignoring them		538	(15.9%)
Feeling depressed		253	(7.5%)
Others		114	(3.4%)
Level of worry about recurrence			
Never		585	(17.6%)
Seldom		672	(20.2%)
Sometimes		1,618	(48.7%)
Always		446	(13.4%)

Levels of worry about recurrence

Over 60% of the patients said they always or sometimes worried about recurrence of their cancer; about 40% said they seldom or never worried about recurrence (Table 3.2.2).

The level of worry decreased with age. Levels of worry about recurrence were highest in the youngest patients (48.6% reported that they sometimes worried; 18.9% reported that they always worried) and lowest in the oldest patients (14.7% reported that they sometimes worried; 2.9% reported that they always worried) (Figure 3.2.7).

Figure 3.2.7 Level of worry about recurrence by age group (N=3,310)



Levels of worry about recurrence did not vary greatly among patients with different cancer stages. 59.6% of patients diagnosed at stage 0 were sometimes or always worried about recurrence, 63.7% at stage I, 62.9% at stage IIA, 60.3% at stage IIB, 63.3% at stage III and 62.5% of patients diagnosed at stage IV were sometimes or always worried about recurrence.

The largest variation was in patients who always worried about recurrence. This proportion is shown to increase slowly from 10.8% at stage 0 to 18.2% at stage III, but dropped to 3.1% who always worried about recurrence when diagnosed at stage IV (Figure 3.2.8).



Figure 3.2.8 Level of worry about recurrence by cancer stage (N=3,410)

