**Title:** The Longer the Time since Cancer Treatment, the Greater the Cognitive Concerns

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**Background:** As many as 60% of breast cancer survivors experience cognitive problems following cancer diagnosis and treatment. These limitations can profoundly impact quality of life – particularly in the area of employment. The purpose of this pilot study was to explore the relationship between time since cancer diagnosis and perceived cognitive concerns.

**Method:** Twenty female breast cancer survivors (average age = 53 years) who self-reported cognitive concerns and had finished chemotherapy between 3 months and 5 years previously were recruited to participate in this study. They completed a questionnaire packet that included the PROMIS Cognitive Concerns Scale.

**Results:** Seventy percent of the sample had a college degree, and 80% were working. Fifty-five percent had stage II breast cancer. All women had surgery, and all but one had chemotherapy. Forty-five percent were taking hormone therapy. A 1-way ANOVA with 4 groups was performed to examine differences in scores for those who had been diagnosed 1, 2, 3, or more than 3 years previously. Women who had been diagnosed three or more years previously had significantly higher scores on the PROMIS Cognitive Concerns Scale than women who had been diagnosed two years previously (F=4.84, df =3/16, p<.02). Those who had been diagnosed within the past year scored in between the other groups. Women diagnosed within the previous two years also tended to perform better on cognitive tests than those diagnosed three or more years before, but those differences were not statistically significant.

**Conclusions:** Contrary to what many providers may believe, concerns about cognitive functioning may not resolve with time. It is possible that cognitive concerns may intensify if women find that cognitive problems do not disappear within the first few years after the completion of active treatment. Because of the small sample size in this study, the results should be investigated in a larger and more diverse sample.