The Oncofertility! Psycho-Education And Couple Enrichment (O! PEACE) therapy: An intervention study protocol for a randomized controlled trial in Japan

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Objective
When the patients are informed by their doctors that they have suffered from cancer, most of all could be upset and could not consider their purpose of life and their fertility concerns. The aim of this study is to examine whether the psychotherapy can reduce concerns of fertility and psychological distress, and improve marital communication with cancer patients and their partners.

METHOD
Patients: We will conduct the randomized controlled trials for early stage breast cancer patients and their partner (n=270 couples).
Intervention: After all participants will give the written informed consent, they will be randomized into three intervention groups: either the O!PEACE therapy twice group (A course), the O!PEACE therapy three times group (B course), or the booklet of the O!PEACE group (C course). The couples will participate in one of three intervention groups and pre-post questionnaires.

We conduct the Oncofertility-related Psycho-Education and Couple Enrichment (O!PEACE) therapy. The O!PEACE therapy is a goal to calm down their upset feeling, reconsider their life and fertility, and regain their mental health and psychological growth. The O!PEACE therapy is a short-term approach based on solution-focused therapy and couple & family therapy with stress coping skill and assertive communication skill training. Well-trained certified psychologists specialized on fertility will conduct the O!PEACE therapy until before first cancer treatment.

Main Outcome Measures: The Concerns of Fertility, the psychological distress (HADS, IES-J, K6), and the Marital Communication Scale.

CONCLUSION
O!PEACE therapy has potential as an accessible and acceptable intervention for cancer patients and their partners.