Objective: To determine possible associations between the risk of breast cancer in Brazilian women and demographic, social and economical variables, and past dietary intake.

Methods: A case-control study was conducted in Joinville, Santa Catarina, Brazil, between June and November 2003 involving a group of 33 women recently diagnosed with breast cancer and a control group of 33 healthy women volunteers. Personal details, health history and past dietary intake were obtained via questionnaires and interviews. Data between groups were compared using $\chi^2$, Fisher, and Student’s t test, whilst associations were evaluated using a non-conditional logistic regression method and odds ratio (OR). Results: Statistically significant differences between the two groups were revealed with respect to age distribution ($P = 0.007$), family income level ($P = 0.02$), educational level ($P < 0.0001$) and attainment of menopause ($P < 0.0001$). After adjustment, with regard to family income level, of the data concerning past dietary intake, the consumption of pig lard (OR = 6.32) and fatty red meat (OR = 3.48) were found to be associated with an increase in the risk of breast cancer. The regular ingestion of apples (OR = 0.30), watermelons (OR = 0.31), tomatoes (OR = 0.16), plain cakes (OR = 0.30) and desserts (OR = 0.20) afforded some degree of protection against the development of the disease. Conclusions: Age (> 45 years), low family income (< $520/month), poor educational level (primary school level or lower) and past regular consumption of pork fat and fatty meat may be factors associated with an increased risk of breast cancer.

Keywords