Triple Negative Breast Cancer Characteristics

Although many subtypes of breast cancer exist, TNBC is defined by the lack of estrogen, progesterone, and human epidermal growth factor receptors. The absence of these three receptors limits treatment options because TNBC does not respond to targeted therapies, such as the use of tamoxifen to treat estrogen receptor-positive tumors (Hugh et al., 2009). Other characteristics of TNBC include high histologic grade, which is indicative of aggressive disease, poor prognosis, increased risk of recurrence within the first three years after diagnosis, and high five-year mortality rates (Arslan, Dizdar, & Altundag, 2009; Chacón & Costanzo, 2010; Ihemelandu et al., 2008; Lara-Medina et al., 2011; Ray & Polite, 2010). The pattern of recurrence for TNBC differs somewhat from that of other breast cancers; the risk of TNBC recurrence is most likely within one to three years.