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1 Summary

Aromatase inhibitors (AIs) are associated with sleep difficulties in breast cancer (BC) patients. 2 3 Sleep is known to favor memory consolidation through the occurrence of specific oscillations, i.e., slow waves (SW) and sleep spindles, allowing a dialogue between prefrontal cortex and 4 the hippocampus. Interestingly, neuroimaging studies in BC patients have consistently shown 5 6 structural and functional modifications in these two brain regions. With the aim to evaluate 7 sleep oscillations related to memory consolidation during AIs, we collected polysomnography 8 data in BC patients treated (AI+, n=17) or not (AI-, n=17) with AIs compared to healthy controls 9 (HC, n=21). None of the patients had received chemotherapy and radiotherapy was finished 10 since at least 6 months, that limit the confounding effects of other treatments than AIs. Fast and slow spindles were detected during sleep stage 2 at centro-parietal and frontal electrodes 11 respectively. SW were detected at frontal electrodes during stage 3. Here, we show lower frontal 12 SW densities in AI+ patients compared to HC. These results concord with previous reports 13 about frontal cortical alterations in cancer following AIs administration. Moreover, AI+ patients 14 tended to have lower spindle density at C4 electrode. Regression analyses showed that, in both 15 patient groups, spindle density at C4 electrode explained a large variance of memory 16 performances. Slow spindle characteristics did not differ between groups and sleep oscillations 17 18 characteristics of AI- patients did not differ significantly from those of both AI+ patients and HC. Overall, our results add to the compelling evidence of the systemic effects of AIs 19 previously reported in animals, with deleterious effects on cortical activity during sleep and 20 associated memory consolidation in the current study. There is thus a need to further investigate 21 sleep modifications during AIs administration. Longitudinal studies are needed to confirm these 22 23 findings and investigation in other cancers on this topic should be conducted.

24 Keywords: breast cancer; aromatases inhibitors; sleep; memory consolidation; frontal cortex

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6 **1. Introduction**

7 Breast cancer (BC) patients frequently complain about sleep disturbances and experience cognitive difficulties both before and after undergoing treatment (Lange et al., 2019; Otte et al., 8 9 2015; Perrier, Duivon, Rauchs, & Giffard, 2021). While most of previous studies predominantly focused on sleep problems following chemotherapy, endocrine therapy should also be 10 11 considered as contributed factors to sleep difficulties in BC patients (Kwak, Jacobs, Haggett, Jimenez, & Peppercorn, 2020; Van Dyk, Joffe, & Carroll, 2021). Endocrine therapy is indicated 12 for at least 5 years as adjuvant treatment for estrogen receptor-positive BC (75-80 % of 13 patients), using aromatase inhibitors (AIs) for post-menopausal patients (Burstein et al., 2019). 14 Als are effective at reducing BC recurrence through downregulation of estrogen action by 15 inhibiting synthesis of estrogens at a systemic level (Brueggemeier, 2004). Such 16 downregulation of estrogens action can further impact several systems that are influenced by 17 circulating estrogens, notably sleep (Dorsey, de Lecea, & Jennings, 2021). Indeed, sleep 18 difficulties are prevalent among BC survivors under AIs treatment (Desai et al., 2013; García-19 Sánchez, Mafla-España, Torregrosa, & Cauli, 2022; Kwak et al., 2020; Savard et al., 2004), 20 with deleterious effect on quality of life and treatment adherence (Kidwell et al., 2014; Smith 21 22 et al., 2022). Our group recently highlighted that BC patients treated with endocrine therapy for 6 months, mainly with AIs, spent more time awake, with more movements at night than patients 23 not treated with endocrine therapy (Martin et al., 2021). Based on these previous reports, one 24 may expect sleep architecture modifications during AIs, with potential deleterious effects on 25 memory processes. 26

Indeed, sleep is known to favor memory consolidation through the occurrence of 1 2 specific oscillations, i.e., slow waves (SW) and sleep spindles. Both oscillations have been related to sleep-dependent memory consolidation through information transfer from 3 hippocampus to neocortex (Diekelmann & Born, 2010; Girardeau, 2023; Miyamoto, Hirai, & 4 Murayama, 2017; Ulrich, 2016). Spindles are the hallmark of sleep Stage 2 and SW are the 5 hallmark of sleep Stage 3. While SW are primally generated at frontal electrodes (Dang-Vu et 6 al., 2005, 2010; Massimini, Huber, Ferrarelli, Hill, & Tononi, 2004), sleep spindles are 7 8 occurring both at frontal (i.e., slow spindles) and centro-parietal (i.e., fast spindles) sites of the 9 scalp (Cox, Schapiro, Manoach, & Stickgold, 2017; Mölle, Bergmann, Marshall, & Born, 2011) 10 and are not represented by the same frequency bands. Fast spindle activity coincide with greater activation in but also between the hippocampus and the cortex (Andrade et al., 2011; Bergmann, 11 Mölle, Diedrichs, Born, & Siebner, 2012; Schabus et al., 2007). Moreover, fast spindle density 12 is related to memory reactivation (Antony, Schönauer, Staresina, & Cairney, 2019; Cairney, 13 Guttesen, El Marj, & Staresina, 2018; Cowan et al., 2020). Through analyses of sleep 14 oscillations on central electrodes, our team has shown SW and spindle modifications in BC 15 patients (Duivon et al., 2022). 16

Aromatases are widely distributed in the brain, particularly in the hippocampus, and estrogens' receptors are present in multiple brain regions, including the frontal, parietal cortices as well as the hippocampus (Zwart, Terra, Linn, & Schagen, 2015). Studies in animals showed that AIs did not affect frontal cortex integrity (Fester et al., 2012; Zhou et al., 2010) while hippocampus plasticity, spine numbers and neuronal firing were impaired following AIs administration (Gervais et al., 2019; Marbouti, Zahmatkesh, Riahi, & Sadr, 2020; Zhou et al., 2010).

Knowing the role of sleep in memory consolidation, the potential impact of AIs on sleepand the presence of both estrogens' receptors and aromatases in the hippocampus and in the

1 prefrontal and parietal cortices, we here argue that sleep-dependent memory consolidation 2 would be altered in BC patients treated with AIs. Liou and colleagues (Liou et al., 2019) have indeed shown that, among postmenopausal BC survivors receiving AIs, insomnia and cognitive 3 impairment had a graded association, in which severity of perceived cognitive impairment 4 increases with insomnia severity. Still, modifications of sleep-dependent memory consolidation 5 during AIs administration is unknown, particularly in relationship with brain regions of interest, 6 such as hippocampus and frontal ones. We here focused on the effects of AIs on cortical sites 7 specifically related to SW and spindles activities (i.e., frontal and centro-parietal ones) 8 associated with memory consolidation. 9

10 2. Materials & Methods

11 **2.1.** Participants

This work is part of the PROSOM-K study dedicated to evaluate the relationship between memory and sleep quality in BC patients compared to healthy controls (HC). A detailed description of this project is provided in the protocol paper (Duivon et al., 2018). Written informed consent was obtained from each participant after a detailed presentation of the study, and the PROSOM-K protocol was approved by the ethics committee (CPP IIe de France III; n°ID-RCB: 2017-A02778-45; ClinicalTrials.gov Identifier: NCT03420105).

Patient inclusion criteria were: (i) age < 70 years old, (ii) no metastatic BC, (iii) already
undergone surgical or radiotherapy treatment, (iv) radiotherapy finished since at least 6 months
and no chemotherapy treatment, (v) menopausal status since at least 1 year at the time of
inclusion, (vi) no personality disorder and progressive psychiatric disorder, (vii) no
neurological sequelae, (viii) no drug or alcohol abuse, (ix) be a native French speaker, and (x)
have at least 7 years of education.

Inclusion criteria for HC were the same as for patients, but without history of cancer and no cognitive impairment based on the Montreal Cognitive Assessment (score > 25; (Nasreddine et al., 2005)). All participants were included between January 2018 and March 2020. Patients

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were recruited by oncologists at the François Baclesse regional center (Caen, France), and HC
were recruited from the general population. We analyzed data from 17 BC patients treated with
both radiotherapy and AIs (named hereafter AI+), 17 patients with radiotherapy only (AI-) and
21 healthy women (HC) matched for age and education level. See Figure 1 for the consort
diagram of patients' recruitment.

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2 Figure 1: Consort flow diagram of patients' recruitment.

3 2.2. Polysomnography recording and sleep architecture

Participants underwent a full polysomnography (PSG) recording at home using a portable 1 2 device (Siesta®, Computedics, Australia). Twenty electrodes were placed over different sites of the scalp according to the international 10 - 20 system: prefrontal (FP1 | FP2), frontal (F3 | 3 F4 | F7 | F8 | Fz), central (C3 | C4 | Cz), temporal (T3 | T4), parietal (P3 | P4 | Pz), occipital (O1 4 $| 02\rangle$, ground and a bi-mastoid reference (M1 | M2), with impedance kept below 5 k Ω . This 5 montage also included an electrooculogram, an electrocardiogram and a chin electromyogram. 6 Respiratory movements, nasal pressure and oxygen saturation were recorded with thoracic and 7 abdominal belts, nasal and oral thermistors, and a finger pulse oximeter respectively. All 8 sensors were connected to the Compumedics Siesta sleep system and placed by a sleep 9 10 specialist (SP). The hardware EEG filter band pass was 0.15 - 121 Hz and the signal was digitalized at a sampling rate of 256 Hz. PSG recordings and sleep stages (N1, N2, N3 and rapid 11 eye movement (REM) sleep) were visually scored in 30-s epochs by an electrophysiology 12 technician (SR) following the recommended standard criteria of the American Academy of 13 Sleep Medicine (AASM; (Berry et al., 2017)) using the Computedics software system 14 (Compumedics ProFusion PSG Lite V4.5 version 468). The following sleep architecture 15 parameters were computed: total time in bed (TIB, min), total sleep time (TST, min), sleep 16 17 onset latency (defined as the time from lights out to the first epoch of sleep stage N2, SOL, 18 min), wake after sleep onset (WASO, min), sleep efficiency (defined as the ratio between time spent asleep and time in bed; SE, %), percentage of time spent in each sleep stage according to 19 TST (N1, N2, N3 and REM sleep; %) and apnea-hypopnea index (AHI). Sleep apnea was 20 21 defined by $a \ge 90\%$ drop of nasal pressure for at least 10 seconds, whereas sleep hypopnea was characterized by $a \ge 30\%$ drop of nasal pressure for a minimum of 10 seconds, associated with 22 an arousal or an oxygen desaturation of > 3%. 23

24 **2.3. Sleep oscillation detection**

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Automatic detection of spindles and SW was performed on all 4-s artifact-free epochs of sleep 1 2 stages N2 and N3, respectively. For this purpose, we used the open-source SpiSOP software (www.spisop.org; RRID: SCR_015673), a custom made Matlab toolbox that utilizes Fieldtrip 3 ((Oostenveld, Fries, Maris, & Schoffelen, 2011), http://fieldtrip.fcdonders.nl). and that has 4 been previously used in several publications in the field (e.g. (Klinzing et al., 2016; Kurz et al., 5 2021; **SpiSOP** documentation 6 Lecci et al., 2017)). is available here: www.spisop.org/documentation/. Standard settings that are defined in this documentation were 7 8 used and are based on the study of Mölle et al (Mölle, Marshall, Gais, & Born, 2002).

As slow and fast spindle frequencies can vary across participants (Cox et al., 2017), we 9 firstly automatically determined slow and fast spindle frequency peaks based on the NREM 10 (Non-Rapid Eye Movement, sleep stages N2 and N3) power spectrum of each participant. Thus, 11 according to their expected power maxima, slow spindle peaks were identified on frontal 12 electrodes (F3, F4 and Fz) and ranged between 9 Hz and 12 Hz, and fast spindle peaks were 13 identified on central (C3, C4 and Cz) and parietal (P3, P4 and Pz) electrodes, at a range between 14 12 Hz and 15 Hz. SW were identified in the EEG recorded from all prefrontal and frontal 15 electrodes (FP1, FP2, F3, F4, F7, F8 and Fz) after bandpass-filtering the signal between 0.3 and 16 3.5 Hz. Then, events detected on artifacted epochs were manually rejected. 17

18 Parameters were computed for each oscillation on a 30-s window. We calculated the number of detected spindles, their density (number of spindles per minutes of N2 sleep), mean 19 duration, mean amplitude (trough to peak potential), average oscillatory frequency, and 20 21 envelope for each participant and channel (F3, F4 and Fz for slow spindles, C3, C4, Cz, P3, P4 and Pz for fast spindles) during sleep stage N2. For SW, number of events, density (number of 22 slow waves per minute of N3 sleep), mean duration, mean amplitude, mean up-to-down slope 23 and mean down-to-up slope were analyzed for each participant and channel during sleep stage 24 N3. 25

1 2.4. Memory task

2 The memory task presented here is adapted from Rehel et al. (Rehel et al., 2019), and detailed presentation and scoring method is provided in Duivon et al. (Duivon et al., 2018). Briefly, 3 participants had to learn 9 intentions (i.e. encoding) on a computer screen and had to recall these 4 intentions after a 12-hour delay, which encompassed an overnight sleep period recorded by 5 polysomnography. Each intention is scored between 0 and 6. We here retained the immediate 6 7 recall retrieval score and the number of trials for encoding (i.e. before sleep recording) and the overall memory retrieval score (i.e. after the night of sleep), corresponding to a sleep-memory 8 9 consolidation score, i.e. the number of intentions correctly recalled, which ranges from 0 to 54 (6 points by 9 intentions). Higher score indicates better memory performances. 10

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2.5. Questionnaires

2.5.1. Sleep disturbances

Subjective sleep disturbances were assessed using the Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI; 13 (Buysse, Reynolds, Monk, Berman, & Kupfer, 1989)). The PSQI is a 19-item questionnaire 14 measuring sleep habits and disturbances over the previous month. The global score ranges from 15 0 to 21. The Insomnia Severity Index (ISI; (Morin, Belleville, Bélanger, & Ivers, 2011)) 16 assessed severity of insomnia symptoms over the past two weeks. This questionnaire has 7 17 items, and a 5-point Likert scale is used to rate each item with answer options that range from 18 0 (no problem) to 4 points (very severe problem). Then, a total score ranging from 0 to 28 is 19 yielded. Higher scores indicate worse sleep quality and greater sleep disturbances and insomnia. 20

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2.5.2. Anxio-depressive factors, fatigue and well-being

Depressive symptoms were assessed with the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI; (Beck, Epstein,
Brown, & Steer, 1988), a 13-item scale with a total score ranging from 0 to 39. Anxiety levels
were measured with the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI-B; (Spielberger, Sydeman, &
Maruish, 1994)), which consists of 20 items evaluating how the participant usually feels (total

score ranges from 20 to 80). Higher values on both scales indicate higher levels of depression
 and trait-anxiety symptoms.

Fatigue and well-being were assessed in BC patients only (AI- and AI+) using the
Functional Assessment of Chronic Illness Therapy-Fatigue (FACIT-F; (Yellen, Cella, Webster,
Blendowski, & Kaplan, 1997)), a 13-item questionnaire (ranging from 0 to 52) and the
Functional Assessment of Cancer Therapy-General (FACT-G; (Cella et al., 1993)), a 27-item
questionnaire (ranging from 0 to 108). Higher scores in both questionnaires indicate lower
fatigue and greater well-being respectively.

9 **2.6. Statistical methods**

Statistical analyses were performed using JASP statistical software (version 0.16.1;
 <u>https://www.jasp-stats.org/</u>) with statistical significance set at *p* < 0.05. ANOVA and ANCOVA
 were followed by *post hoc* Tukey honestly significant difference tests where applicable.

Demographic characteristics (age and education level), levels of anxiety (STAI-B) and depression (BDI), sleep questionnaires scores (PSQI and ISI) and AHI were compared between groups using ANOVA. Memory scores were compared between groups using Type II ANCOVA, controlling for age, education level, anxiety (STAI-B), depression (BDI) and AHI, given the known effects of such variables on memory performances.

18 Sleep architecture and oscillation parameters were compared between groups using 19 Type II ANCOVA. Sleep variables were considered as dependent variables, group as 20 independent variable, and age, education level, anxiety (STAI-B), depression (BDI) and AHI 21 as covariates. For sleep oscillation parameters, analyses were performed on each electrode 22 separately.

Finally, we computed multiple backward stepwise regression in order to investigate the association between memory score and sleep oscillation parameters in with group and sleep oscillations parameter as explaining variables, accounting for age, education level, anxiety

(STAI-B), depression (BDI) and AHI, known to affect both sleep and memory. Only sleep
oscillation parameters that differed between AI+ patients and either AI- patients or HC were
considered in the regression model. In order to avoid autocorrelation effects between electrodes
placed on the same cortical sites (e.g. frontal site with F3, F4), averaged values of electrodes
were considered in the model and each sleep oscillation parameter was considered in a separate
model.

7 **3. Results**

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3.1. Participants' characteristics

9 Education level, anxiety and depression levels did not differ between groups, while a trend was
10 observed for age (p = 0.059). See Table 1.

11 <u>Table 1</u> : Demographical, behavioral of participants and patients and clinical characteristics of patients.

	AI- patients $(n - 17)$	AI+ patients (n	HC	ANOVA	Effect size
	$\frac{(II = I7)}{M \pm SD}$	$M \pm SD$	$\frac{(II = 2I)}{M \pm SD}$	<i>p</i> -values	η2
Demographical character	ristics	0			
Age (years)	59.65 ± 5.70	63.47 ± 4.42	62.62 ± 4.35	0.059	0.103
Education level (years)	12.31 ± 3.29	11.25 ± 3.38	11.76 ± 1.73	0.55	0.023
Behavioral characteristic	s				
Anxiety (STAI-B)	39.76 ± 9.88	39.41 ± 11.98	42.29 ± 9.30	0.64	0.017
Depression (BDI)	3.00 ± 2.32	3.88 ± 3.87	4.10 ± 3.24	0.56	0.022
Fatigue (FACIT-F)	38.00 ± 8.67	35.88 ± 11.94	NA	-	-
Well-being (FACT-G)	88.18 ± 12.69	81.41 ± 18.88	NA	-	-
Clinical characteristics					
Stage of the cancer, n (%)				
0	17 (100%)	2 (11.76%)	NA	-	-
Ι	0	11 (64.71%)	NA	-	-
IIA	0	4 (23.53%)	NA	-	-
Surgery, n (%)					

Breast-conserving surgery (lumpectomy)	15 (88.24%)	15 (88.24%)	NA	-	-
Mastectomy	3 (17.65%) *	2 (11.76%)	NA	-	-
Time since radiotherapy (months)	8.00 ± 4.08	8.20 ± 3.25	NA	-	-
Time since anti- aromatases therapy (months)	NA	7.00 ± 2.79	NA	-	-
Aromatase inhibitors					
Anastrozole, n (%)	NA	13 (76.47%)	NA	-	-
Exemestane, n (%)	NA	1 (5.88%)	NA	-	-
Letrozole, n (%)	NA	3 (17.65%)	NA	<u> </u>	-

1 * One patient had a breast-conserving surgery and a mastectomy.

HC: Healthy Controls; AI-: breast cancer patients not treated with aromatase inhibitors; AI+: breast cancer patients treated with aromatase inhibitors; STAI-B: State-Trait Anxiety Inventory; BDI: Beck Depression Inventory; FACIT-F: Functional Assessment of Chronic Illness Therapy-Fatigue; FACT-G: Functional Assessment of Cancer Therapy-General; NA: Not Applicable. M: Mean; SD: Standard Deviation. Italic, trend; bold, significant.

For all patients, radiotherapy was finished since at least 6 months. Age, education level, anxiety and depression were compared between all groups with ANOVA, followed by *post hoc* Tukey honestly significant difference tests where applicable.

8 **3.2. Sleep questionnaires and architecture**

9 Groups significantly differed on subjective sleep disturbances (PSQI; F(2, 52) = 3.44, p =

10 0.039) and insomnia severity (ISI; F(2, 52) = 4.00, p = 0.024). AI+ patients reported greater

11 sleep complaints and more severe insomnia symptoms than HC. AI- patients did not differ from

12 both HC and AI+ patients. Sleep architecture parameters did not differ between groups. See

13 Table S1.

14 **3.3. Sleep oscillation parameters**

15 During sleep stage N2, fast spindle density measured on C4 electrode tended to differ between

16 groups (F(2, 47) = 2.81, p = 0.070), with AI+ patients tended to have lower fast spindle density

than HC (p = 0.063). AI- patients did not differ from both AI+ and HC.

18 During sleep stage N3, SW density on all prefrontal and frontal electrodes was lower in

- 19 AI+ patients compared to HC (p < 0.02 for all electrodes). AI- patients tended to differ from
- HC at Fz electrode (p = 0.07). Patient groups did not differ significantly.

21 For ease of reading, only densities of both fast spindles and SW are depicted in Table 2 as other

22 results did not lead significant results (data not shown).

	AI- patients (n = 17)	AI+ patients (n = 17)	HC (n = 21)	ANCOVA	Effect size	ANCOVA Post-hoc	A p-values	
	$M\pm SD$	$M\pm SD$	$M\pm SD$	<i>p</i> -values	η2	HC vs AI-	HC vs AI+	AI- vs AI+
Fast sp N2 per	pindle density d minute	etected durin	ng sleep stage					
C3	4.56 ± 1.06	3.97 ± 1.17	4.64 ± 0.73	0.21	0.05	<u>.</u>	-	-
C4	4.55 ± 0.91	3.82 ± 1.22	4.60 ± 0.66	0.07	0.09	0.87	0.06	0.24
Cz	4.54 ± 1.05	3.99 ± 1.08	4.65 ± 0.67	0.15	0.06	-	-	-
Slow w	vave density det	tected during	sleep stage N3	per minute				
FP1	11.82 ± 2.74	10.97 ± 1.74	13.26 ± 2.03	0.005	0.16	0.11	0.004	0.53
FP2	11.82 ± 2.77	11.11 ± 1.85	13.20 ± 1.97	0.012	0.13	0.14	0.01	0.62
F3	10.02 ± 2.40	9.39 ± 1.47	11.20 ± 1.93	0.018	0.14	0.19	0.016	0.60
F4	9.84 ± 2.32	9.46 ± 1.54	11.11 ± 1.70	0.020	0.13	0.13	0.022	0.79
F7	10.65 ± 2.28	9.91 ± 1.66	11.65 ± 1.73	0.013	0.12	0.40	0.009	0.27
F8	9.83 ± 2.01	9.12 ± 1.55	10.94 ± 1.76	0.009	0.15	0.25	0.007	0.37
Fz	10.16 ± 2.27	9.77 ± 1.75	11.64 ± 1.91	0.009	0.16	0.069	0.012	0.84

1 <u>Table 2</u>: Sleep oscillation densities during sleep stage N2 for spindles and during sleep stage N3 for slow waves.

7 Fz electrode during sleep stage 3, respectively.

HC: Healthy Controls; AI-: breast cancer patients without aromatase inhibitors; AI+: breast cancer patients with aromatase inhibitors; M:
 Mean; SD: Standard Deviation; FDR: false discovery rate (correction for multiple comparisons). Comparisons of each parameter were realized with analyses of covariance (ANCOVA) with age, education level and AHI as covariate. ANCOVA were followed by post hoc Tukey honestly significant difference tests where applicable. Italic, trend; bold, significant.

⁶ See Figure 2a and b for fast spindle density at C4 electrode during stage 2 and SW density at



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2 Figure 2: Sleep oscillation densities, memory retrieval scores and their relationships. **a and b**, Sleep oscillation parameters 3 were compared between groups using ANCOVA. Sleep variables were considered as dependent variables, group 4 as independent variable, and age, education level, STAI-B, BDI and AHI as covariates. Analyses were performed 5 on each electrode separately. a, Fast spindle density (number per minute) on C4 electrode during sleep stage 2 6 across patients not treated (AI-) or treated (AI+) with aromatases inhibitors and healthy controls (HC). b, Slow 7 wave density (number per minute) on Fz electrode during sleep stage 3 across patients not treated (AI-) or treated 8 (AI+) with aromatases inhibitors and healthy controls (HC). c, Memory scores across patients not treated (AI-) 9 or treated (AI+) with aromatases inhibitors and healthy controls (HC). Memory scores were compared between 10 groups using ANCOVA, controlling for age, education level, BDI and STAI-B levels and AHI, given the known 11 effects of such variables on memory performances. c and d, We computed multiple backward stepwise regression 12 in order to investigate the association between memory score and sleep oscillation parameters, accounting for 13 age, education level, BDI and STAI-B levels and AHI, known to affect both sleep and memory. Only sleep 14 oscillation parameters that differed between AI+ patients and either AI- patients or HC were considered in the 15 regression model. In order to avoid autocorrelation effects between electrodes placed on the same cortical sites, 16 averaged values of electrodes were considered in the model i.e. for frontal site, averaged values were obtained 17 using FP1, FP2, F3, F4, F7, F8 and Fz electrode values. c, Regression plot showing the relationship between 18 memory score and fast spindle density at C4 during sleep stage 2 in interaction with BDI in all groups, with 19 confidence interval in gray. d, Regression plot showing the relationship between memory score and slow wave 20 density at Fz during sleep stage 3 in all groups, with confidence interval in gray.

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1 **3.4.** Memory performances

ANCOVA analyses on memory encoding performances (i.e. before sleep recording) did not reveal any significant group effect for the immediate cued recall scores (F(2, 47) = 0.44, p=

4 0.65, Eta² = 0.02), nor for the number of trials (F(2, 47) = 0.60, p= 0.21, Eta² = 0.06).

ANCOVA analyses on memory consolidation performances (i.e., retrieval scores after the night
of sleep) yielded a significant group effect (F(2, 47) = 3.41, *p* =0.041, Eta² = 0.09) with scores
(Means ± SD) as follows : AI- : 35.41 ± 11.33; HC: 34.76 ± 8.03 and AI+ : 27.71 ± 8.77. See
Figure 2c. Post hoc analysis revealed a trend towards lower memory performances in AI+
patients compared AI- patients (*p* = 0.079), and compared to HC (*p* = 0.061), while AI- and HC
did not differ (*p* = 0.99).

3.5. Associations between sleep oscillation parameters and memory score in AI+ patients

Multiple linear regressions were conducted to predict memory retrieval score using groups and sleep oscillation parameter as predictors, accounting for covariables. Only sleep oscillation parameters that differed or tended to differ between AI+ and HC and/or AI- were considered in the model, i.e. fast spindle densities on C4 and SW densities on prefrontal and frontal regions. The final outputs are presented in Tables 3 and 4, respectively. Results indicate that 52% and 53% of the variance in memory retrieval score was explained by predictors in both models.

Both fast spindle density and BDI were negatively associated with memory retrieval score in all groups. In both patient groups, BDI was negatively associated with memory scores (trend for AI- and significant for AI+). In AI- patients, fast spindle density was associated with memory score in interaction with either AHI (trend, positive relationship) or BDI (significant, negative relationship). In AI+ patients, fast spindle density tended to predict memory retrieval score in interaction with BDI with a negative relationship. See Table 3 and Figure 2d.

SW density only tended to predict memory retrieval score in interaction with AHI in all
 groups, with a negative relationship. Regarding AI- patients, results revealed only a trend for
 significant relationship between SW density and memory score in interaction with STAI-B. See
 Table 4 and Figure 2e.
 Overall, these results indicate significant prediction of memory retrieval score with fast

spindle density in interaction with covariables in both patient groups, while SW density only

7 tended to predict memory score in AI- patients and not in AI+ patients.

6

8 <u>Table 3</u>: Results from the stepwise regression analysis following backward selection of the model using fast
 9 spindle density during Stage 2 at the C4 electrode and groups as predictor accounting for covariables.

Predictors	Estimate	Standard Errors (SE)	<i>t</i> -values	<i>p</i> -values
Intercept	87.31	35.90	2.43	0.020
AI-	1.99	42.97	0.05	0.96
AI+	-64.68	35.93	-1.80	0.08
FS density on C4 during sleep stage N2	-13.99	7.29	-1.92	0.06
Education level	1.56	0.37	4.20	<0.001
АНІ	0.33	1.52	0.22	0.83
Anxiety (STAI-B)	-0.15	0.12	-1.24	0.22
Depression (BDI)	-19.18	7.71	-2.49	0.02
FS density on C4 during sleep stage N2 * AI-	-0.26	8.85	-0.03	0.98
FS density on C4 during sleep stage N2 * AI+	10.53	7.72	1.36	0.18
AHI * AI-	-3.26	1.94	-1.68	0.10
AHI * AI+	-0.20	1.56	-0.13	0.90
BDI * AI-	17.15	8.71	1.97	0.06
BDI * AI+	17.20	7.90	2.18	0.04
FS density on C4 during sleep stage N2 * AHI	-0.04	0.33	-0.13	0.89
FS density on C4 during sleep stage N2 * BDI	4.02	1.59	2.52	0.02
FS density on C4 during sleep stage N2 * AHI * AI-	0.76	0.41	1.85	0.07
FS density on C4 during sleep stage N2 * AHI * AI+	0.03	0.35	0.09	0.93

FS density on C4 during sleep stage N2 * BDI * AI-	-4.05	1.77	-2.29	0.03
FS density on C4 during sleep stage N2 * BDI * AI+	-3.14	1.67	-1.88	0.07
R ²	0.69			
Adjusted R ²	0.52			
Residual standard error	6.812			
F(19, 35)	4.07			
AIC	226.20			

p-value of the model following backward selection <0.001 Note: AI-: breast cancer patients without aromatase inhibitors; AI+: breast cancer patients with aromatase inhibitors; FS: Fast spindle; FS Density – C4 during sleep stage N2: Fast spindle density on C4 electrode during sleep stage N2; STAI-B: State-Trait Anxiety Inventory; BDI: Beck Depression Inventory; AHI: Apnea-Hypopnea Index; AIC: Akaike Information Criterion. Italic, trend; bold, significant.

1 2 3

<u>Table 4</u>: Results from the stepwise regression analysis following backward selection of the model using slow wave density during Stage 3 at the frontal electrodes and groups as predictor accounting for covariables.

Predictors	Estimate	Standard Errors (SE)	t- values	<i>p</i> - values	
Intercept	-101.80	112.20	-0.91	0.38	
AI-	-86.91	186.20	-0.47	0.65	
AI+	-358.20	253.90	-1.41	0.17	
SW density on frontal regions during sleep stage N3	0.56	0.69	0.81	0.43	
Age	1.85	1.55	1.20	0.25	
Education level	4.80	3.96	1.21	0.24	
Anxiety (STAI-B)	-1.29	1.03	-1.25	0.23	
AHI	0.72	0.55	1.30	0.21	
Depression (BDI)	0.74	2.59	0.29	0.78	
SW density on frontal regions during sleep stage N3 * AI-	0.16	1.03	0.15	0.88	
SW density on frontal regions during sleep stage N3 * AI+	2.85	1.86	1.53	0.14	
Age * AI-	2.23	2.91	0.77	0.45	
Age * AI+	6.29	4.23	1.49	0.15	
Education level * AI-	3.50	5.27	0.66	0.51	
Education level * AI+	5.32	5.56	0.96	0.35	
STAI-B * AI-	-4.37	2.68	-1.63	0.12	

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STAI-B * AI+	-3.40	2.37	-1.44	0.17
AHI * AI-	3.40	2.17	1.57	0.13
AHI * AI+	-1.06	0.69	-1.52	0.14
BDI * AI-	-0.49	11.05	-0.05	0.96
BDI * AI+	14.53	7.91	1.84	0.08
SW density on frontal regions during sleep stage N3 * Age	-0.01	0.01	-1.05	0.31
SW density on frontal regions during sleep stage N3 * Education level	-0.01	0.02	-0.35	0.73
SW density on frontal regions during sleep stage N3 * STAI-B	0.01	0.01	1.11	0.28
SW density on frontal regions during sleep stage N3 * AHI	-0.01	0.00	-2.03	0.06
SW density on frontal regions during sleep stage N3 * BDI	0.00	0.02	0.00	1.00
SW density on frontal regions during sleep stage N3 * Age * AI-	-0.01	0.02	-0.73	0.48
SW density on frontal regions during sleep stage N3 * Age * AI+	-0.05	0.03	-1.53	0.14
SW density on frontal regions during sleep stage N3 * Education level * AI-	-0.01	0.03	-0.49	0.63
SW density on frontal regions during sleep stage N3 * Education level * AI+	-0.06	0.04	-1.63	0.12
SW density on frontal regions during sleep stage N3 * STAI-B * AI-	0.03	0.02	1.84	0.08
SW density on frontal regions during sleep stage N3 * STAI-B * AI+	0.02	0.02	1.57	0.13
SW density on frontal regions during sleep stage N3 * AHI * AI-	-0.01	0.01	-1.05	0.31
SW density on frontal regions during sleep stage N3 * AHI * AI+	0.01	0.01	1.72	0.10
SW density on frontal regions during sleep stage N3 * BDI * AI-	-0.01	0.07	-0.12	0.91
SW density on frontal regions during sleep stage N3 * BDI * AI+	-0.09	0.05	-1.73	0.10
R ²	0.84			
Adjusted R ²	0.53			
Residual standard error	6.812			

F (19, 35)	2.76
AIC	222.93
<i>p</i> -value of the model following backward selection	0.011

Note: AI-: breast cancer patients without aromatase inhibitors; AI+: breast cancer patients with aromatase inhibitors; SW: Slow wave; SW density on frontal regions during sleep stage N3: Slow wave density on all frontal electrodes (FP1, FP2, F3, F4, F7, F8 and Fz) during sleep stage N3; STAI-B: State-Trait Anxiety Inventory; BDI: Beck Depression Inventory; AHI: Apnea-Hypopnea Index; AIC: Akaike Information Criterion. Italic, trend; bold, significant.

5 4. Discussion

6 With the aim to evaluate sleep-dependent memory consolidation during AIs BC, we computed 7 both SW's characteristics in prefrontal and frontal regions as well and spindle's characteristics on centro-parietal electrodes. For this purpose, BC patients treated with AIs since at least 6 8 9 months were compared to BC patients not treated with AIs and healthy controls (HC). As a side 10 note, none of patients had received chemotherapy and radiotherapy (received by all BC patients) was finished since at least 6 months. Knowing the effects of AIs on hippocampus physiology, 11 we expected spindle alterations on centro-parietal electrodes of the scalp (i.e., that allows a 12 dialogue between hippocampus and frontal areas) in patients treated with AIs. Here we showed 13 that, during Stage 2, fast spindle density on C4 electrode tended to be lower in AI+ patients 14 15 compared to HC. Moreover, during Stage 3, SW density was lower throughout frontal electrodes in AI+ patients compared to HC. These results suggest lower memory reactivation, 16 and thus consolidation, during sleep in BC patients during AI treatment. In order to quantify 17 18 the variance in memory score explained by the oscillations' modifications during AI treatment, we further conducted multiple regression analyses between sleep oscillation parameters and 19 memory retrieval score. Results showed that lower fast spindle density was related to lower 20 memory performance in both patient groups. Overall, our results add to the compelling evidence 21 22 of the systemic effects of AIs previously reported in animals (Gervais et al., 2019; Marbouti et 23 al., 2020; Zhou et al., 2010), both at the cerebral and behavioral levels.

In accordance with the role of both fast spindles and SW in memory consolidation during sleep (Girardeau, 2023), we found that patients treated with AIs had both lower fast

spindles (trend) and SW (significant) densities, while only fast spindle density was negatively 1 2 related to memory performance. Such a relationship between fast spindle density and memory performance concords with prior reports in HC about the beneficial role of sleep spindles on 3 later memory performance (Cowan et al., 2020; Lafortune et al., 2014). Previous findings have 4 suggested weakened or reversed memory consolidation processes in older population as 5 reflected by negative correlation between memory performances and sleep (Scullin, 2013). Our 6 results thus support recent hypotheses about premature brain aging in BC patients (Alfano et 7 8 al., 2017; Carroll et al., 2019; de Ruiter et al., 2023; Züst et al., 2023).

AIs have systemic effects and significantly impair hippocampus physiology (Gervais et 9 al., 2019; Marbouti et al., 2020; Zhou et al., 2010). Studies in animals have shown that AIs did 10 not affect frontal cortex integrity (Fester et al., 2012; Zhou et al., 2010) while hippocampus 11 plasticity, spine numbers and neuronal firing were impaired following AIs administration 12 (Gervais et al., 2019; Grassi et al., 2011; Marbouti et al., 2020; Zhou et al., 2010). In line with 13 such information, fast spindles, that are associated with hippocampal activity (Mölle et al., 14 2011; Schabus et al., 2007), but not slow spindles differed between patients treated with AIs 15 and HC. In the current study, AIs probably impaired hippocampus activity leading to impaired 16 memory performance. Sleep spindles alone are sufficient to facilitate synaptic changes with 17 18 memory improvement after sleep (Wei, Krishnan, Komarov, & Bazhenov, 2018) that would explain the lack of memory performance alterations in patients not treated with AIs. Apple and 19 colleagues (Apple et al., 2018) have found that hippocampal functional connectivity may be a 20 21 marker for compensatory mechanism in BC survivors having been treated with chemotherapy and being currently treated with Tamoxifen that acts as a selective estrogen receptor modulator. 22 In line with such hypothesis, BC patients not treated with AIs may here have compensate 23 prefrontal alterations through higher hippocampal activity as reflected by the lack of significant 24 difference with HC in terms of both spindles' density and memory performance. 25

1 Moreover, SW density at frontal sites was lower in AI+ patients compared to HC, 2 suggesting impaired SW generation in the prefrontal cortex in BC patients receiving AIs. Both 3 white matter integrity (Menning et al., 2015) and functional connectivity hyperactivation (McDonald, Conroy, Ahles, West, & Saykin, 2012; Scherling, Collins, Mackenzie, Bielajew, 4 & Smith, 2011, 2012) in prefrontal regions have been highlighted in BC patients before 5 chemotherapy, concurrently with lower cognitive performances (See (Sousa, Almeida, Bessa, 6 & Pereira, 2020), for review). Both surgery (i.e., anesthesia) and fatigue effects have been 7 proposed as mechanisms underlying such alterations. In the current study, given the time 8 between surgery and the assessment point, one may rather consider the effects of fatigue. 9 10 Indeed, cancer-related fatigue has been proposed as a possible mechanism underlying cancerrelated cognitive impairments through elevated levels of proinflammatory cytokines (Jenkins 11 et al., 2016). Such hypothesis requires further investigations. 12

One may consider limitations of the current study. First, our sample size is small, given 13 the difficulty to recruit BC patients with such specific inclusion criteria. Especially, results 14 related to fast spindle density did not reach significance and should be taken with caution. 15 Nonetheless, we were able to particularly focus only of AIs effects without other treatments 16 interfering with the results. Indeed, in the current study, none of the patients had received 17 18 chemotherapy and radiotherapy was finished since at least 6 months. Moreover, our groups of patients were homogeneous and comparable in terms of cancer stages, treatments and 19 demographical characteristics that is rarely the case in previous studies in the field. In addition, 20 21 we considered cofounding variables, although not all, that could have interfered with results (education level, anxiety, depression, sleep apnea). Both latter points are therefore strengths of 22 the current study and our results provides initial evidence of the potential deleterious effects of 23 AIs on sleep-related memory consolidation processes. Still, the cross-sectional nature of our 24 study does not allow for causal inference and our results cannot be applied to all cancer 25

populations. Nonetheless, the current patients' population account for a high proportion of 1 2 cancers. Regarding sleep assessment, the first-night effect was not controlled in this study. However, our groups did not differ in terms of sleep latency nor for other sleep architecture 3 parameters that characterize first-night effect (Ding, Chen, Dai, & Li, 2022), except the number 4 of awakenings. Moreover, such an effect is expected to have been the same for all participants 5 in the current study. Finally, although we took sleep apnea index into account in our analyses, 6 we could not compute leg movements as a confounding factor, given that our PSG montage did 7 8 not include leg's electrodes. This parameter could have still influence sleep results and should be consider un future studies. We believe that our results will pave the way to conduct such 9 10 studies in order to further help clinicians in decision to improve the risk-benefit balance with 11 beneficial effects on patients' quality of life.

To conclude, using fine-grained analyses of sleep oscillations related to memory 12 consolidation, we here showed lower frontal SW density, and, to a lesser extent lower centro-13 parietal spindle density in patients treated with AIs compared to HC. Such modifications of 14 sleep oscillations explained a large variance of patients' memory performances. These results 15 concord with previous reports about frontal cortical alterations in cancer as well as 16 hippocampus physiology modifications following AIs administration. Overall, our results add 17 18 to the compelling evidence of the systemic effects of AIs previously reported in animals, with deleterious effects on cortical activity during sleep and associated memory consolidation in the 19 current study. These findings illustrate the need for improving sleep in order to limit memory 20 21 difficulties in BC patients with potential beneficial effects on treatment adherence. Moreover, these results highlight the need to limit adverse effects of AIs on sleep, either by using other 22 treatments, or by proposing sleep therapies along AI treatment. However, further studies using 23 longitudinal designs as well as others cancer populations are needed to confirm and precise 24 these findings. 25

Authors' contribution: SR: Roles/Writing - original draft and Writing - review & editing, Data 1 2 curation, Formal analysis, and Investigation; MD: Investigation, Writing - review & editing; FD: Data curation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Validation; PCl and PCh: Software, Writing 3 - review & editing; PCI: Data Curation; JMG: Project administration; Resources; CS, JG, GE, 4 DA, CL and FV: Resources; FE and FJ: Conceptualization, Supervision, Writing - review & 5 editing; BG: Conceptualization, Methodology, Supervision, Project administration, Funding 6 acquisition, Writing - review & editing; and JP: Conceptualization, Methodology, Supervision, 7 Project administration, Funding acquisition, Validation, Formal analysis, Writing - review & 8 editing. All authors have critically revised the final version of the manuscript and have approved 9 its current version. 10

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Sleep oscillations related to memory consolidation during aromatases inhibitors for breast cancer

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Highlights

- Frontal slow wave density is lower during aromatase inhibitors treatment.
- Seemly, centro-parietal spindle density tend to be lower.
- Spindle density is related to memory performance.
- Aromatase inhibitors for breast cancer modify sleep-related memory consolidation
- Current patients' results confirm previous reports in animal models.

Journal Prevention

Declaration of interests

☑ The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

□ The authors declare the following financial interests/personal relationships which may be considered as potential competing interests:

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