



The Wellness Column

by Amanda J. Butler

I was invited to attend the premiere of *Sacar Pecho—Del Viaje Con El Miedo, Standing Tall—The Journey With Fear*, at the Teatro Principal de Palma earlier this month—a deeply moving documentary filmed here in Mallorca. This film features eight women diagnosed with breast cancer, sharing their stories, fears, and triumphs.

The experience carried extra weight for me, because one of the protagonists, Sheriellane Pascua, is the Pilipino wife of my late father's caregiver. They both cared for my father tenderly for the last few years of his life. Seeing Sheriellane on screen, speaking of her experiences, was beautiful, powerful and deeply emotive.

Sacar Pecho, directed by Rubén Capilla and Álex Rodríguez and produced by Vivir del Cuento Comunicació, has been submitted for the **Balearic Talent Award** at the Atlàntida Mallorca Film Fest. More than just a film; it's a piece of cinematic medicine for anyone who has heard the words, "*You have breast cancer*." Its goal is to humanise medicine, raise awareness, and offer solidarity to those facing this disease—with around 800 women diagnosed annually here in the Balearic Islands.

The film follows Ana, Mari Pau, Joana, Bel, Mar, Eva, Sheriellane, and Leire—women from very different backgrounds united by one shared journey. Their path spans the rugged beauty of Mallorca's Serra de Tramuntana, taking them along the GR221 from Pollensa to Andratx over several days. More than hiking, more than camaraderie, the journey becomes a metaphor for the inner landscape of confronting fear, pain, and uncertainty.

Oncologist Dr. Antònia Perelló shared how the protagonists open their hearts about the moment of diagnosis, the fear, the support, the setbacks and the rallies. The film reminds us that breast cancer is one of the most common health issues affecting women: in the Balearic Islands, roughly 800 yearly diagnoses; in Spain, 1 in 8 women will be diagnosed in their lifetime.

President Llorenç Galmés from the Consell de Mallorca described it as "*the clear and courageous*

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voice of women who reveal pain but also strength, life, dignity." It underscores values that matter deeply: transparency in medicine, emotional authenticity, and the healing power of nature, friendship and movement.

Innovations & Hope in Treatment

While hearing these stories—especially Sheriellane's, diagnosed at just 27 and contending with recurrence—reminded me how ruthless breast cancer can be, and thankfully, the remarkable progress in treatment. Cutting-edge advances such as hormone therapies, immunotherapies, and personalised medicine (guided by genetic and molecular profiling) are making care more effective while reducing side effects. Survival rates for early-stage breast cancer are now over **90% at five years**, thanks to earlier detection, improved imaging, and systemic therapies. These advances mean breast cancer is increasingly seen not just as a battle to endure, but as a challenge that many overcome and live beyond—with quality, purpose, and hope.

Sheriellane's Story: From Patient to Thriver

Sheriellane's presence in the documentary touched me deeply, but her own words capture her journey best: "I was first diagnosed with breast cancer



PHOTOS: AMANDA J. BUTLER

Sacar Pecho will be shown next in Inca on Friday, October 10 (In Spanish & Mallorquin).

in 2015 at the age of 27 while living in Norway. When I later moved to Mallorca to join my fiancé, I suffered a relapse in 2018 when it metastasized into my bone, particularly my sternum. I began treatment through the Spanish national health system, which was so incredible—I shudder to think what might have happened had I still been living in the Philippines.

I was also blessed with support by what I firmly believe was divine intervention, from an integrative medical centre, Cell Medicum, where I received therapies to boost my immune system between chemotherapy sessions. This helped me regain enough vitality to find a job while applying for Spanish residency, something for which I will be eternally grateful.

Now, 10 years on at 37, I'm not just surviving but thriving. My journey has been about resilience,

finding strength in vulnerability, and proving that

life can still be full of purpose and joy, despite the challenges."

She adds: "My story isn't about fighting cancer, it's about living fully with it. Cancer didn't take away my dreams—it gave me a louder voice to remind others: don't wait for life to be perfect to celebrate it. Many people feel silenced by illness. I chose to speak up—through this documentary, social media, and writing—turning what could have been private suffering into public empowerment."

Sheriellane also shared that the documentary is currently nominated at the Atlàntida Film Festival. While the producers have not yet confirmed its next screenings, there is hope it will soon reach other platforms—with English subtitles—so it can inspire an even wider audience.

Her most moving words came when she reflected on walking in the Serra de Tramuntana with the other women: "I felt an incredible mix of peace and power. Surrounded by the striking beauty of nature and sisterhood, it was as if the mountains carried our pain but also amplified our strength. In that moment, I wasn't just a cancer patient—I was a thriver, walking with hope, resilience, and connection."

I was immensely proud of Sheriellane. Her courage at such a young age, her vulnerability and resilience, are inspiring. And thankfully, treatments have improved enormously in recent years. More precision, less invasive techniques, earlier detection—all leading to longer survival, fewer side-effects, and better quality of life.

The Takeaway

Sacar Pecho is more than a documentary—it's a rallying cry, a comfort, a lifeline. It shows that a diagnosis doesn't mean surrender; there is community, there is nature, there is movement; and above all, there is hope.

To any woman reading this who is on this journey, or knows someone who is: you are not alone. The path may be rugged, but it is possible to stand tall, to heal, and to live—and live well. Because with each year of medical innovation, each shared story, and each act of compassion, we move closer toward a future not just of surviving, but of thriving. Let its message of strength, awareness, and healing ripple far and wide.

Sacar Pecho will be shown next in Inca on October 10 (In Spanish & Mallorquin), and then made available in public hospitals in the Balearic Islands through the Solti Foundation and the AECC.

If you have a wellness story you would like to share PM Amanda on IG @amandamallorca and follow her for all things wellness in Mallorca.



SACAR PECHO
A Journey of Strength, Hope & Healing from Cancer