Evaluation of a Breast and Colon Cancer Survivorship Program

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This article describes a cancer survivorship program that addressed quality of life (QOL) changes related to chemotherapy. The program focused on adult breast and colon cancer survivors at a community oncology practice in the southeastern United States, and consisted of an educational visit designed to identify and address QOL changes that occurred as a result of chemotherapy. The QOL of Cancer Survivors (QOL-CS) survey administered before and after the visit analyzed QOL changes that occurred as a result of participating in cancer treatment and a subsequent cancer survivorship program, which demonstrated clinical significance for program participants. Physical, psychosocial, social, and spiritual well-being measures were affected by program participation. Improvement in distress related to the initial cancer diagnosis and family distress were the most significant reported changes, and male gender and advanced age were associated with improved psychosocial well-being.

Early cancer detection and improved treatments have resulted in survivorship trends whereby individuals are living years beyond the acute treatment phase of cancer (Patterson, 2010). These survivors face many physical, psychosocial, financial, social, and spiritual challenges as a result of their cancer treatment and diagnosis. In addition, cancer survivors suffer from a variety of symptoms such as fatigue, aches and pains, depression, cognitive difficulties, insomnia, and decline in social functioning (Bennett et al., 2010). The purpose of this article is to describe the implementation and evaluation of a cancer survivorship program that identified and addressed various QOL changes that occurred as a result of receiving chemotherapy.

Cancer Survivorship and Uncertainty in Illness

The uncertainty of an individual's health status after cancer treatment presents many survivors with significant psychological...