The six aims of the Institute of Medicine (IOM), 2001 action plan call for improvements to provide safe, effective, patient-centered, timely, efficient, and equitable care. Embedded in those aims is the responsibility of healthcare providers to ensure continuity of care and provide patients easy access to information and treatment by anticipating and customizing care according to patient needs and values. The unprecedented rate of advancement in cancer research and development has contributed to the complexity of cancer care. Various seminal reports highlighted the deficiencies of a fragmented healthcare system that failed to provide access to timely, equitable, and standard cancer care to everyone in the United States (Freeman & Reuben, 2001; Haynes & Smedley, 1999; Hewitt & Simone, 1999; Smedley, Stith, & Nelson, 2003).

Patient navigation was introduced as an intervention to reduce patient barriers and achieve optimal healthcare outcomes. Following the reported success of the patient navigation program initially initiated by Freeman, the President’s Cancer Panel recommended that patient navigation should become an integral part of breast health centers and other areas of cancer care (Freeman & Reuben, 2001). Subsequently, the Patient Navigator Outreach and Chronic Disease Prevention Act of 2005 was enacted to provide funds to create patient navigation programs in various centers throughout the United States. The current study examined the value and effectiveness of a patient navigation program newly initiated at the breast center of a tertiary care facility in terms of timeliness of access to cancer care, resolution of barriers to care, and patient satisfaction.

At a Glance

- Patient navigation may improve timely access to cancer care, help resolve barriers to care, and increase patients’ satisfaction with their care experience.
- Patient navigation programs may help patients achieve optimal healthcare outcomes, but more systematic evaluation and research are needed.
- Nurses should be active participants in the development and evaluation of patient navigation programs, with the aim of improving cancer care for all patients.

**Literature Review**

Because patient navigation has the potential to improve cancer outcomes and transform complex, fragmented health care to

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