

Improving Treatment Adherence of Breast Cancer Multimodal Patients through Patient Navigation



Winifred W. Thompson PhD, MSW^{1,3}, Ashwini Hardikar MPH², Paige Teller MD⁴, Sheryl G. A. Gabram MD, MBA, FACS¹, Tamara Mason MPH, CHES^{1,3}, Chryston Jones MPH, CHES⁵, Kimberly Jacob Arriola PhD, MPH^{1,3}

¹Emory University (EU) Winship Cancer Institute & AVON Comprehensive Breast Center Grady Health System, ²Tomorrow's Youth Organization, Nablus, West Bank, Palestine, ³EU Rollins School of Public Health, ⁴Medical University of South Carolina Department of Surgery, ⁵Administration for Children & Families Department of Health and Human Services.



Background

- > African American compared to with White women in the US are diagnosed with later stage breast cancer (BC), experience longer treatment delays, are less likely to receive/complete treatment and have a 38% higher mortality rate.
- > Patients that are diagnosed at later stages and/or recommended for Multimodal (MM) therapy are less likely to begin and complete recommended treatment.
- > Patient Navigation is a methodology that has been shown to aid in the support and treatment adherence of BC cancer patients while contributing to their quality of life.
- > The purpose of this study:
 - > To build on the Patient Navigation work of the AVON Foundation Community Education & Outreach Initiative by providing intensive Patient Navigation services to MM BC patients.
 - > Track adherence to clinically recommended treatment guidelines for newly diagnosed breast cancer patients.

American Cancer Society, Breast Cancer Facts & Figures 2009-2010, 2009
Freeman, H. Freeman HP. Patient navigation: a community based strategy to reduce cancer disparities. J Urban Health. Mar 2006;83(2):139-141.

Overview

- > Offers Intensive Patient Navigation Services to MM Breast Cancer Patients.
- > Treatment adherence is the willingness to start and complete treatment recommended by health care providers.
- > MM patients are patients who are recommended to receive at least three forms of cancer treatment (e.g., surgery, chemotherapy, radiation, and/or hormonal therapy)
- > Patient Navigation will provide a compassionate continuum of care that provides and promotes access, utilization, retention and adherence in the healthcare system.

Methods

- > Fifteen month grant to expand the current Patient Navigation Program of the AVON Foundation Comprehensive Breast Center of Grady Health System.
- > Recruited & Trained 5 Patient Navigators and 1 alternate to be paired with newly diagnosed MM breast cancer patients throughout the duration of treatment.
- > 34 patients were enrolled in the Komen Patient Navigation Program.
- > Patients Received:
 - > Navigation Services – Follow-up & reminder phone calls, accompanied to medical appointments, referrals, & support
 - > Intensive Navigation Services – Support groups, home visits, small incentive items

Results

- Patient medical records were abstracted to track treatment adherence.
- > Enrolled 34 patients (exceeded goal)
- > 1-7 patients & their families attended support groups ~ 29.4%
- > 94% of patients participated in home visits
- > 33 (97%) patients were adherent to their recommended treatment

Conclusion

- > These data demonstrate promising evidence that BC multimodal patients can be identified, enrolled into an intensive patient navigation program to increase adherence for recommended forms of treatment modalities.
- > This form of navigation may be needed in order to reduce the inequities in breast health that African American women face.
- > Future research will explore the applicability of these intensive patient navigation services among a larger number of patients as well as other healthcare systems.

