



BREAST CANCER EXPERIENCES IN HISPANIC WOMEN
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ABSTRACT

Breast cancer mortality rates in Hispanic women have always been higher when compared to Non-Hispanic Whites even though Hispanic women have lower incidence rates in comparison to Non-Hispanic Whites. The reasons for these disparities are varied and related to barriers such as socioeconomic, psychological, and cultural that Latina women face when diagnosed. These barriers make seeking treatment for their breast cancer more difficult. Additionally, when compared to other ethnic groups Latina women are diagnosed at later stages and less likely to receive timely and adequate treatment.

The purpose of this study was to analyze trends and factors that affected the survival of Latina women diagnosed with breast cancer and better understand what the barriers are (cultural, educational, socioeconomic) that impede Latina women with breast cancer from receiving adequate care and treatment.

The methods by which this was achieved was through the following steps: 1) a review of the research related to the experience of breast cancer among Hispanic women 2) attending a weekly breast cancer support group via Zoom consisting of 8 breast cancer survivors and 3) conducting individual interviews with 3 Latina breast cancer survivors.

The Latina women interviewed were from the Spanish-speaking support group known as, “Triunfadoras.” They were between the ages of 35-65, had all been diagnosed with breast cancer, and had completed treatment for their breast cancer and were now in remission.

The individual interviews with the 3 survivors were recorded through Zoom and transcribed from Spanish to English.

The results showed that during their breast cancer journey, the women had experienced poor quality of care due to lack of understanding of their prognosis; healthcare providers not speaking their native language; and insufficient access to proper care or services because of socioeconomic status. Participants also shared the negative impact the diagnosis and treatment had on their mental health and their relationships with their family.

Implications of nursing that could be implemented to improve quality of care and the quality of life for Hispanic women diagnosed with breast cancer are 1) taking the time to listen to individual patient concerns and provide education in a way that is culturally and linguistically 2) providing emotional support to decrease personal anxieties regarding the side effects of cancer treatments, 3) their ability to care for their children, 4) sexuality concerns and their relationship with their partners.

The findings of this study highlighted the importance of encouraging patients to be part of their treatment plan and help them identify concerns they need to address with their physician, preferably in their native language. The results also revealed the importance of family support and education from the time of diagnosis through treatment plan and survivorship.

