A1.2: Promoting Healthy Behaviors in Low-Income Cancer Survivors

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Abstract:
Introduction: Many people in the U.S. have difficulty maintaining their health during the cancer experience because they encounter multiple barriers to acquiring or participating in health-promoting behaviors. Promoting healthy behaviors of low-income persons will provide them with information and support to enhance their health and quality of life. The purpose of the study was to pilot test a theoretically-based Health Promotion Intervention (development participant/provider support relationships, weekly health promotion classes for 6 weeks and telephone follow-up support for 2 months).

Method(s): Cancer survivors were recruited from an outpatient cancer clinic serving only low-income clients. After giving consent to participate, survivors who had been diagnosed with Stage 1-3 cancer at least six months completed a study packet assessing personal and cancer characteristics, HP behaviors, self-efficacy for engaging in HP behaviors, and outcome variables (physical health, functional health, and quality of life). Participants were randomized to either the health promotion intervention or control group. The health promotion classes taught participants ways to engage in health-promoting behaviors of stress management, surveillance of cancer, nutrition, physical activity & exercise, and spiritual growth.

Results: A total of 46 people participated, including 26 in the intervention and 20 in the control. Overall, participants were primarily Caucasian, older, divorced, educated, and were unemployed or on disability leave. Total HP behavior scores among the intervention group increased over time, whereas the HP behavior scores for the control remained constant. A significant time x group interaction was present, which suggest that the intervention and control groups differed in terms of how their HP behaviors changed.

Discussion & Conclusions: Findings demonstrate low-income cancer survivors engage in HP behaviors and participants in the Health Promotion Intervention improved significantly. Findings from this feasibility study will guide further refinement of the intervention to provide cancer survivors the information, skills, and support they need to improve their health and dimensions of quality of life.

Abstract History:
This abstract has not been presented or accepted for presentation in whole or in part at the SNRS or other scientific meeting.

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