Purpose/Objectives: To explore ethnic differences in psychological distress and social withdrawal after receiving an abnormal mammogram result and to assess if coping strategies mediate ethnic differences.

Design: Descriptive correlational.

Setting: Two urban mobile mammography units and a rural community hospital in the state of Washington.

Sample: 41 Latina and 41 non-Latina Caucasian (NLC) women who had received an abnormal mammogram result.

Methods: Women completed standard sociodemographic questions, Impact of Event Scale–Revised, the social dimension of the Psychological Consequences Questionnaire, and the Brief COPE.

Main Research Variables: Ethnicity, psychological distress, social withdrawal, and coping.

Findings: Latinas experienced greater psychological distress and social withdrawal compared to NLC counterparts. Denial as a coping strategy mediated ethnic differences in psychological distress. Religious coping mediated ethnic differences in social withdrawal.

Conclusions: Larger population-based studies are necessary to understand how ethnic differences in coping strategies can influence psychological outcomes. This is an important finding that warrants additional study among women who are and are not diagnosed with breast cancer following an abnormal mammogram.

Implications for Nursing: Nurses may be able to work with Latina patients to diminish denial coping and subsequent distress. Nurses may be particularly effective, given cultural values concerning strong interpersonal relationships and respect for authority figures.

Key Words: breast cancer; coping; cultural competence; Hispanic; prevention; detection; quality of life