Quality of Life, Social Support, and Uncertainty Among Latina Breast Cancer Survivors

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**Purpose/Objectives:** To examine the relationship between perceived social support, uncertainty, and their individual and combined effects on quality of life (QOL) among Latina breast cancer survivors.

**Design:** Descriptive, correlational study.

**Setting:** Selected private hospitals in Staten Island, Brooklyn, and Manhattan and the American Cancer Society units of Staten Island, Brooklyn, and Queens, New York.

**Sample:** 89 Latina breast cancer survivors ages 30–86 years.

**Methods:** Participants completed a personal data sheet, the Social Support Questionnaire, the Mishel Uncertainty in Illness Scale–Community form, and the Ferrans and Powers Quality of Life Index–Cancer Version III at home and returned the questionnaires to the investigators via postage-paid envelope.

**Main Research Variables:** Perceived social support, uncertainty, and QOL.

**Findings:** A significant positive correlation was noted between perceived social support and total QOL. A significant negative correlation was found between uncertainty and QOL. Social support predicted 15.1% of QOL variance, and uncertainty predicted 10.4% of additional QOL variance. Together, these two variables predicted 20.5% of QOL variance.

**Conclusions:** Perceived social support and uncertainty play a pivotal role in managing or maintaining QOL in Latina breast cancer survivors.

**Implications for Nursing:** Social support, uncertainty, and QOL are essential variables that should be acknowledged when delivering health care to Latina breast cancer survivors. Nurses cognizant of Latina breast cancer survivors’ issues and concerns in areas of social support and uncertainty are in a unique position to enhance QOL.

**Key Points . . .

- Social support and uncertainty are pivotal elements that have an impact on breast cancer survivors’ quality of life (QOL).
- Assumptions about QOL of Latina breast cancer survivors cannot be made in light of their unique cultural dynamics, sociodemographic differences, and behavioral characteristics.
- Nurses need to be mindful of the influence of Latina issues and concerns when planning and delivering care to Latina breast cancer survivors.
- The paucity of research focusing on Latina breast cancer survivors creates a need for continued investigation of this population.

**Background**

**Hispanic and Latino or Latina Population**

The term Hispanic refers to the heterogeneous communities from Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean, and South America. The term Latina refers to the Hispanic women of Latin American origin. The Hispanic/Latina Movement is a social justice movement advocating for social, educational, and political rights for Hispanics/Latinas and recognizing the multiplicity of the Hispanic/Latina experience. The Hispanic/Latina Movement seeks to promote the political, social, economic, and cultural development of the Hispanic/Latina communities and to ensure their full and equal participation in the political, social, and economic life of the United States.