

Social support post-cancer lacking among minority women

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Nonwhite women reported receiving less social support than white women after cancer treatment, according to data presented at the Third AACR Conference on The Science of Cancer Health Disparities, held Sept. 30-Oct. 3, 2010.

"This is an important finding when designing and promoting [social support](#) resources for female [cancer survivors](#) to better include cancer survivors of color," said study author Jennifer M. Jabson, M.P.H., Ph.D., a postdoctoral research fellow in the department of community health sciences at Boston University. "This might be useful when interventionists and community support groups are conducting outreach as they may want to focus special attention on learning the support needs and desires of cancer survivors who are also women of color in their communities."

Jabson and colleagues evaluated data from the 2005 Health Information National Trends Survey, a probability survey of health communication and information among U.S. adults aged 18 years and older. Participants were randomly recruited and included 577 female cancer survivors, of which 75 were ethnic minority cancer survivors.

Overall, 87 percent of the entire sample of cancer survivors reported receiving social support from a friend or family member to whom they could talk about their health. However, 99 percent of white cancer survivors reported having a friend or family member as social support compared with 86 percent of nonwhite female cancer survivors.

When participants were asked about engagement in moderate-intensity physical activity, 99 percent reported some moderate-intensity physical activity in a typical week. Broken down by race/ethnicity, 78 percent of white female cancer survivors and 75 percent of nonwhite female cancer survivors reported some moderate-intensity physical activity.

"A preponderance of literature has focused on the relative lack of physical activity among many groups, and knowing of the multiple benefits of physical activity, we were encouraged to find women reporting physical activity," Jabson said.

Future research should examine the role of [physical activity](#), social support and other reinforcing factors that may influence nonwhite women to participate more or less than other cancer survivors, according to Jabson.

"We need to continue our work to better understand the complexities of cancer survivorship for women of color in an effort to maximize on the opportunity for positive cancer survivorship," she said.

Provided by American Association for Cancer Research

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