Community-Based Workshops to Improve Quality of Life for Latina Breast Cancer Survivors and Their Caregivers

Principal investigator

Kristi Graves, PhD

Organization

Georgetown University

What was the research about?

Women with breast cancer face challenges that may affect their quality of life. They may feel tired, anxious, or sad. Also, family members and friends may feel stress from caring for the women and themselves. These challenges may continue after women have completed treatment. Latina women who have had breast cancer may have lower quality of life than non-Latina women with breast cancer.

In this study, the research team compared the breast cancer support Latina women and their caregivers usually get from community centers with a new program called Nueva Vida. The team looked at women and caregivers' quality of life and how satisfied women were with their cancer care.

What were the results?

Women in the Nueva Vida program and those who got usual support didn't differ in

- How tired, anxious, or sad they felt
- How well they could move around to perform daily tasks
- Their feelings about their social life
- Whether they felt satisfied with their cancer care

Caregivers in the Nueva Vida program and those who got usual support didn't differ in their quality of life.

Who was in the study?

The study included 136 Latina women and 136 caregivers who spoke English or Spanish. Women were undergoing or had completed treatment for breast cancer. Women received care at four community centers that serve Latino families. The centers were in New York City; San Jose, California; and Washington, DC.

What did the research team do?

Each woman asked an adult caregiver to be in the study with them. The research team assigned each pair by chance to be in Nueva Vida or to get usual support. In Nueva Vida, a trained group leader held eight workshops weekly or biweekly over two to four months at the community centers. Five of the workshops covered

- How cancer affects families
- Coping with stress
- Talking with your caregiver
- Faith and cancer
- Balancing physical and emotional needs

Women and caregivers voted on three other topics, such as role changes and cancer myths. People chose whether they wanted to have the workshops in English or Spanish.

Those who received usual support at their center could take part in social events, support groups, and workshops on living with cancer. They could also get help making healthcare choices.

The research team gave women and caregivers surveys at the start of the study, after the final workshop, and six months later.

Latina women who had been treated for breast cancer, their caregivers, and doctors gave input during the study.

What were the limits of the study?

The study took place at community centers that serve Latino families in three cities. Results may differ in

other places or at other types of centers. If women and caregivers who went to the workshops talked about them with those who didn't, it could have affected the study results.

Future research could look at other ways to support Latina women with breast cancer and their caregivers.

How can people use the results?

Cancer centers can consider these results when looking for ways to support Latina women with breast cancer and their caregivers.

To learn more about this project, visit www.pcori.org/Graves182.