

Breast Cancer and Dyadic Psychosexual Well-Being

Principal Investigator: Betsy L. Fife, PhD

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Abstract

There is strong empirical evidence that the diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer are associated with psychosexual vulnerability for both the survivor and her partner. A decrease in libido and intimacy and an increase in emotional distress are common within the relationship. The primary purpose of this evaluation study is to assess the effectiveness under controlled conditions of an intervention designed to promote psychosexual well-being and decrease the incidence of co-morbidity in the partner dyad following a diagnosis of breast cancer by affecting coping strategies. The sample will include 50 pre-menopausal women with stage I or II breast cancer and their partners who are randomized into intervention and control groups. Given our theoretical model, the target of intervention will be coping behavior with the outcome being psychosexual adaptation, which includes sexual functioning, intimacy, depression and anxiety. The intervention will take place early in the illness trajectory, 4 months following diagnosis, and we will obtain data at baseline prior to the intervention (T1), immediately following completion of the intervention (T2), and 6 months following diagnosis (T3). The psychoeducational intervention will include 3 sessions that focus on communication, problems of sexual functioning, increasing intimacy and support, and coping with emotional distress. Analyses will evaluate the outcome and the effectiveness of the intervention in promoting psychosexual well-being within the dyad living with breast cancer. The study will be conducted by an interdisciplinary team that includes expertise from nursing, psychology, oncology, surgery, and statistics.

Performance Site(s)

Indiana University School of Nursing
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Key Personnel:

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