

Comparing Provider and Survivor Perspectives on Navigating Family Dynamics While Caring for South Asian Breast Cancer Survivors

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ABSTRACT

Background: Breast cancer prevalence is increasing within the South Asian (SA) population. Clinicians need to navigate cultural factors including cancer related stigma to provide patient-centered care. We sought to compare the perspectives of SA breast cancer survivors and clinical providers to examine the barriers and facilitators to culturally attuned care (CAC).

Methods: 13 South Asian breast cancer survivors (45.6 ± 7 y) and 14 multidisciplinary healthcare providers participated in semi-structured interviews, which were professionally transcribed, coded, and thematically analyzed.

Results: Survivors and providers noted that engaging family was a core component of providing CAC. Both observed that 1) Survivors received instrumental and emotional support from an extensive network of family members locally and abroad; 2) Many survivors chose to withhold diagnoses from specific family members; and 3) Virtual care could enhance family involvement in care. Cultural differences in caregiving expectations, survivor autonomy in decision-making, and approach to cancer were identified as potential causes of conflict between survivors, caregivers, and clinicians. Both noted significant system-level barriers to engaging family in healthcare, including lack of time/resources and language barriers.

Conclusions: This work reinforces both the value and complexity of family support among SA breast cancer survivors, and points to several issues for providers to consider when providing CAC. It is noteworthy that both clinicians and survivors agreed on the importance of having a supportive network that includes members who live locally or abroad. Given the complexity of these family dynamics, more research is needed to better understand this understudied population.

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