Assessing Needs among Cancer Survivors in Georgia

Angela K. Patterson
Cam Escoffery
Mohammad Khalaf
Joan Giblin

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/ghpc_materials

Recommended Citation
Patterson, Angela K.; Escoffery, Cam; Khalaf, Mohammad; and Giblin, Joan, "Assessing Needs among Cancer Survivors in Georgia" (2016). GHPC Materials. 128.
https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/ghpc_materials/128

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Georgia Health Policy Center at ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University. It has been accepted for inclusion in GHPC Materials by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University. For more information, please contact scholarworks@gsu.edu.
ASSESSING NEEDS AMONG CANCER SURVIVORS IN GEORGIA

Angela K. Patterson; Cam Escoffery, PhD, MPH, CHES; Mohammad Khalaf, MPH; Joan Gilbin, MSN FNP-C AOCN; Karuna Ramachandran, MA, EdM; Rachel Cannady

1. Georgia Center for Oncology Research and Education, Inc., Atlanta, GA; 2. Rollins School of Public at Emory University, Atlanta, GA; 3. Formerly with Georgia Health Policy Center, Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA; 4. Winship Cancer Institute at Emory University, Atlanta, GA; 5. Center for Pan Asian Community Services, Atlanta, GA; 6. American Cancer Society Cancer Survivorship Care Plan at Emory University, Atlanta, GA

BACKGROUND

An estimated 1.45 million cancer survivors live in the United States. In Georgia, there are currently 325,970 survivors.¹ It is predicted that the number of survivors 5 years post diagnosis will increase to 37% within the decade.²

Georgia has a long standing history of collaboration to assess and enhance the quality of survivorship care in the state with leaders from the Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH), Georgia Center for Oncology Research and Education (GCORE), Andrew Young School of Policy Studies at Georgia State University, Regional Cancer Coalition of Georgia, American Cancer Society, Georgia Society of Clinical Oncology (NASCIO), and the Emory University Rollins School of Public Health, among others. Representatives serve as members of the Georgia Cancer Control Consortium (GCC), which leads the Cancer Control Plan.

One of the eight priorities of the plan is focused on Survivorship. In 2013, the GC3 Survivorship Working Group (SWG) began work on a statewide survivors’ needs assessment to understand the physical, psychosocial, practical and spiritual needs of adult cancer survivors. While needs of cancer survivors have been assessed, there is less knowledge about unmet needs.

METHODS

The GC3 SWG and the Rollins School of Public Health developed a cross-sectional survey using National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) and Commission on Cancer (CoC) guidelines. The survey was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Emory University in 2014.

Survey Methodology

• 76 items
• Recruitment & Dissemination: Adult cancer survivors who had completed treatment and live in the state of Georgia.
• Study sample:Georgia’s Cancer Survivorship Care Plan (CSC) is the first statewide comprehensive online portal that connects patients with cancer survivors in their area, survivors with community resources and resources with cancer organizations. One important resource launched in 2014, Georgia’s Cancer Survivorship Connection (CSC) is the first statewide comprehensive online portal that provides evidence-based survivorship information and resources for Georgia survivors, caregivers and healthcare professionals. The site is elevated to be more inclusive by improving accessibility and highlighting the needs of all patients.

RESULTS

Respondents were primarily female (78%) married (35%), college-educated (55%) and insured (97%). 83% were White, 16% were African American and 3% were Hispanic. 36% of respondents were within 1 year of treatment; 45% were 1 - 5 years post treatment. A high proportion of survivors reported moderate to extreme levels of emotional distress with: depression (32.7%), anxiety (32.1%), stress (30.2%), fear of recurrence (28.2%) and isolation (25.9%).

Over 50% of survivors reported receiving little or no assistance from providers for these needs. Only 35% received a survivorship care plan (SCP) and 98% of those who received it reported it was helpful.

CONCLUSIONS

Results demonstrate the psychosocial needs of cancer survivors in the state. However, several racial and ethnic minority groups and people from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds were significantly underrepresented in this study. Further research is needed to expand the study sample by working with community organizations and CoC hospitals to develop a more targeted approach to reaching individuals with limited English proficiency, limited access to technology and other minority populations.

Knowledge of areas of distress and unmet needs for survivors, including racial and ethnic minorities and the socioeconomically disadvantaged, can inform providers’ practices to guide survivors towards evidence-based approaches such as SCPs and utilize community resources to implement culturally and linguistically competent services that address their needs.

One important resource launched in 2014, Georgia’s Cancer Survivorship Connection (CSC) is the first statewide comprehensive online portal that provides evidence-based survivorship information and resources for Georgia survivors, caregivers and healthcare professionals. The site is elevated to be more inclusive by improving accessibility and highlighting the needs of all patients.

For more information, please contact the Georgia Health Policy Center at 404.413.0314 or visit us online at www.ghpc.gsu.edu

REFERENCES

1. American Cancer Society Cancer Survivorship Care Plan at Emory University, Atlanta, GA