

Navigating Weight Loss Among Breast Cancer Survivors: A Qualitative Study of Overweight and Obese Patients' Experiences

Authors : Yi Fung Lin, Pei Chen Tsai

Abstract : Purpose: Many breast cancer survivors actively seek information about diet, exercise, and nutritional supplements to expedite recovery, reduce the risk of recurrence, and enhance their quality of life. While weight loss is not a primary concern for overweight or obese patients during the active treatment phase, they continue to face the additional burden and risks associated with excess weight post-treatment. This group has complex views on weight loss: they are concerned that exercise or dietary control might exacerbate symptoms, yet they also believe that obesity could negatively impact health. These perceptions can have both positive and negative effects on weight management. Therefore, this qualitative study aimed to explore the factors that influence overweight or obese breast cancer survivors' ability to manage their weight. Method: Eight women participated in in-depth interviews in 2022. Data was extracted based on the verbatim transcripts of the audio files, and the analysis was conducted through careful reading of the text. This qualitative research collected data until data saturation was reached. Results: A total of 22 codes were identified and subsequently integrated into three main themes: (1) Facilitators, including support systems, others' successful weight loss experiences, education, responsibility to others, and motivation; (2) Barriers, encompassing physical limitations, the stigma associated with weight loss, the cost of weight loss, antiestrogen medication, and cancer symptoms; (3) Variable Factors, which comprise perspectives on cancer, perspectives on obesity, and past experiences with weight loss. Conclusions: These findings are similar to previous research on barriers and motivators, highlighting variable factors that exist and can lead to either positive or negative effects on weight loss. The results can inform the development of weight management programs tailored to the needs of overweight or obese breast cancer survivors. Additionally, the identified factors represent vital variables for future studies, serving as valuable references for further research in this area.

Keywords : weight management, breast cancer, overweight, obese, cancer survivors

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