Chemotherapy Related Disruptions in Information Processing and Social Health in Older Breast Cancer Survivors

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Chemotherapy-related disruptions in information processing (DIPS) are a common

complaint among breast cancer survivors. These disruptions often last for years beyond

treatment and can affect cognitive domains such as memory, attention, processing speed,

executive function, and language. While many women have reported problems carrying

out the functions essential for maintaining important social roles, little is known about the

effect chemo-related DIPS have on the overall social health in older breast cancer survivors.

Social health includes performance and satisfaction in important social roles. Social roles

that are most important to the psychological well-being and identity of a person are salient

roles. The aims of this multiple methods exploratory study are to use qualitative and

quantitative designs to 1) describe perceived changes in salient role performance and

satisfaction since undergoing chemotherapy; 2) illicit perspectives of how disruptions in

information processing led to changes in salient social role performance; and 3) explore

relationships between subjective cognitive function, salient role performance, salient role

satisfaction, and psychological well-being post chemotherapy. The sample will include 20

breast cancer survivors, aged 50 and older, who are at least 12 months post chemotherapy

treatment. Expressive writing will be used to accomplish Aims 1 & 2. Linear models will

be used to address Aim 3. The goal of this research is to help researchers and clinicians

develop strategies and interventions that will help breast cancer survivors maintain

satisfactory participation in salient social roles and improve social health following

chemotherapy treatment.