

# *Innovations in the Care of Cancer Survivors*

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Learner Objective: The learner will be able to describe the contribution Faith Community Nurses can make to the quality of life for cancer survivors and their families.

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# Background

- Breakthroughs in research, treatment, and technology have increased the survival rate for many types of cancer accounting for the 14.5 million cancer survivors in the United States today (ACS, 2014 NCI, 2014).
- Estimates are that only about 15 % survivors are treated at large US Cancer Centers, while the remaining 85 % are treated at local community agencies near where survivors live.



# Background (Cont)

- The increase in survivorship has given rise to some identified health risks associated with being a survivor. These health risks influence physical, psychological, spiritual and psychosocial domains of an individual's wellbeing (CDC, 2015).
- This means that 67 % of persons with cancer can expect to be alive in five years. Eighty percent of childhood cancer survivors are alive in five years, and their ten-year survival rate is nearing 75 % (NCI, 2014).



# Background (Cont)

- An increased survival rate for those diagnosed with cancer creates a shift in the focal point of current evidenced-based research from prevention and detection efforts to interventions needed to improve and sustain quality of life for survivors and their families (CDC, 2015).
- Increased researcher awareness of this shift toward intervention is demonstrated by an impressive 40 % of recently funded grants, all of which contain some type of intervention component (Rowland, 2011).



# Purpose

- Explore community-based interventions tailored for cancer survivors and their families.
- Make recommendations for future research and practice.



# Method

- A systematic inquiry of the literature resulted in a comprehensive literature search.
- The literature search was limited to dates between 2004 and 2014.
- Articles with community-based interventions for survivors and their families were selected, resulting in fifteen articles. Based on the findings of the literature synthesis, items were developed for a survey.



# Method (Cont)


- A survey of a convenience sample of Faith Community Nurses (FCN) (n=25) representing a wide geographical distribution over the U.S. and diverse types of faith communities was done.
- The survey examined if FCNs were engaged with cancer survivors and if so, what was the type and frequency of interventions.





# Results

The literature synthesis noted five themes:

- 1.) Support services for clients and families are available in the community;
  - 2.) Variance exists in types of services available, settings, cost, and levels of support for these services;
  - 3.) There is a disparity in the integration of minorities;
  - 4.) Exercise is a primary focus for cancer rehabilitation; and,
  - 5.) There is a lack of spiritual and family interventions with limited integration of Faith Community Nurse
-  in survivorship care.



# Results (Cont)

Interventions most important to Faith Community Nurses in caring for clients with cancer:

- Listening
- Support
- Prayer
- Guidance on resources
- Support groups
- Home visits
- Presence.



# Conclusions

The role of Faith Community and FCN's in caring for cancer survivors needs to be researched further as an innovative and economic intervention to the whole person care and well-being of cancer survivors and their families.

- Inclusion of the FCN as a trusted member of the inter-professional oncology team holds promise to improve outcomes for survivors and decrease health care expenditures.
- Further research is needed on the efficacy of interventions for survivors within their community-based settings.



# Publication

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