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Managing the new normal: Assessment and management practices for gynecologic cancer survivors

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The primary intent of cancer treatment is to cure the disease and many patients struggle with significant morbidity in terms of physical and psychosocial distress post treatment. The push to address the psychosocial issues of cancer survivors initially stemmed from a published report by the Institute of Medicine [IOM] in 2007. Clinicians are now finding ways to ensure they are treating the whole patient which includes psychosocial care. To investigate the sources of distress and evidenced-based recommendations for assessment and management of distress in the gynecologic cancer survivor, PubMed, Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature [CINAHL] and the Cochrane Library databases were searched. Breast cancer survivors were included in this review due to similar treatment modalities and physical and psychosocial treatment related side effects as gynecologic cancer patients. The search yielded 1408 articles and 27 articles remained for final analysis. Distress is a consequence of treatment related side effects that negatively affects quality of life in cancer survivors. Several validated screening tools were documented to assess distress and quality of life. Distress screening programs should be individualized and involve all members from the multidisciplinary care team and tailored to each respective cancer institution. Psycho-education/survivor to survivor programs was among the most common interventions utilized. Oncology nurses are in a position to provide education and support to assist cancer survivors. There is limited data on management techniques for the gynecologic cancer survivor. This data will inform a clinical capstone project in the gynecologic cancer survivor.

Biography

Cynae Johnson is currently a Doctor of Nursing Practice Student at Johns Hopkins University. She is a Nurse Practitioner at the Kelly Gynecologic Oncology Service and Director of the Gynecologic Oncology Survivorship Care Program.

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