



Measuring a Model Palliative Program for Supportive Care In Breast Cancer

Authors: Luana DeAngelis, Jenny Isaacs, PhD

You Can Thrive!

ABSTRACT

Preliminary data was collected in 2011-2013 in a population of 28 women. Participants were enrolled for weekly visits to multidisciplinary care center. Modalities were administered tandem. These include weekly patient navigation, peer support, acupuncture, reflexology and massage. Nutritional counseling bi-weekly. Participants agreed to self-evaluate symptoms over time. Ratings from before/after the first and fourth sessions, and after eighth visit, showed self-reported symptom reduction was statistically significant. This trend continued. In contrast, an intensive wellness seaside retreat for 10 metastatic women was conducted over 3 days in 2015. Primary and secondary symptom evaluation before, during and after retreat was recorded while participants received yoga, guided imagery, therapeutic sound meditation, journaling, Reiki, aromatherapy, massage, and spiritual/peer support.

METHODS



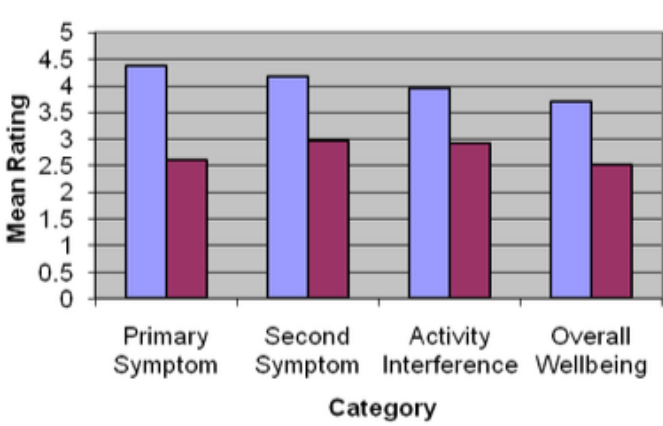
Evaluation tool: MYMOP. A self-evaluation tool that aims to measure the outcomes the client considers most important. On the first occasion the questionnaire is completed within the consultation.

The subject chooses one or two symptoms that they consider most pressing. They also choose a life activity limited or prevented by this symptom. Their choices are written down and then scored for severity over the past week on a seven-point scale with 0 being as good as it can be and 6 being as bad as it could be. Lastly, well-being is scored on a similar scale.

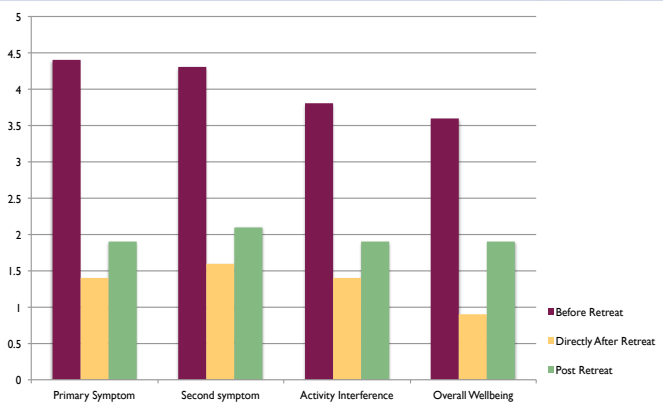
On follow-up questionnaires the wording of the previously chosen symptoms is unchanged. Each client is evaluated before the 1st visit, then after 4th. In our metastatic data subjects were measured before, directly after and two weeks post retreat. Several published studies have shown that MYMOP is practical, reliable, and sensitive to change. These studies from both orthodox and complementary practitioners include people receiving treatment for a range of problems. We've found it to be the appropriate self-evaluation tool for this program.

RESULTS

4 Consecutive Weekly Multidisciplinary Visits



3 Day Seaside Intensive MBC Retreat



- Gentle Yoga
- Meditation
- Imagery
- Therapeutic Sound
- Art/Journaling
- Healthy food & info
- Dance
- Massage
- Peer Support
- Motivational Coaching

CONCLUSIONS

These preliminary findings suggest a reduction in symptomology, less symptom interference with daily activities, and a better overall sense of wellbeing after *participating in the program* for 4 consecutive sessions. Women who stayed with the program were measured at 8 and 13 weeks the trend of symptom reduction appears to continue. When measuring metastatic symptoms utilizing these methods in a retreat setting the outcomes were significant and maintained over time. This preliminary data indicates that our integrative care survivorship program is an effective supportive tool on several levels. Further studies with larger populations are essential to clinically demonstrating the effectiveness of a comprehensive survivorship program such as this. Led to Columbia IRB approving a research study.

HISTORY OF PROGRAM

You Can Thrive! has facilitated a replicable program for early palliative care using a novel integrative methodology in the NYC Tri-State breast cancer population since 2005. Programs take place in a 'safe space' with an all volunteer paradigm. Additionally, the participants receive many services in one afternoon, rather than only massage or acupuncture. Our peer supportive, survivor driven model has become synonymous with integrative care. One area of specific success has been in finding women who are 'holding on' to tumors or lumps and are fearful of moving forward and seeking medical treatment. With referrals from word of mouth and doctors, we help them feel safe and informed enough to get the best care possible and enter treatment. Mortality rates have dropped in NYC equally for black women and white women, making it a model city for breast cancer outcomes in the nation.