

Peer Review File

Article Information: <https://dx.doi.org/10.21037/apm-24-54>

Review comments

Reviewer A

Comment 1: This is an interesting overview of the multifaceted emotional complexities faced by survivors and the need to tailor interventions and supportive strategies based on the diverse psychological needs of patients with breast cancer. However, since it is submitted as review article, the manuscript should include the search strategy summary.

Reply 1: Thank you for your comments and suggestions. This is an invited article with a predefined subject. However, to address your concern, we have added a new statement in the abstract and the manuscript itself summarizing the search strategy used.

Abstract: "Articles were reviewed through searches of PubMed and through searches of the author's own file."

Paper: "Articles were reviewed through searches of PubMed using research terms such as breast cancer survivors, cancer recurrence, psychosocial symptoms and psychosocial intervention. Additionally, articles were reviewed through searches of the author's own file.

The final list was generated based on relevance to the broad scope of this review."

Comment 2: Although metastatic breast cancer is mentioned, this does not necessarily mean they are palliative (scope of the journal). Next to this, Major Categories of Psychological Issues facing survivors also includes information on psychological challenges before diagnosis. Since it this

manuscript is submitted to annal of palliative medicine it should be limited to psychological challenges for palliative breast cancer patients.

Reply 2: As mentioned before, this is an invited paper with a predefined subject. Thys, the manuscript discusses psychological challenges faced by breast cancer survivors, including those with metastatic disease.

Reviewer B

Dear authors,

Thanks for sharing such an interesting article. The psychosocial aspect of cancer survivorship is a major challenge today and a notable area of gap in care and research. Such articles are always welcome. Upon reading this manuscript, the following are my recommendations for the authors:

Comment 1: Is this article about fear of recurrence (FCR) or the psychosocial aspect of cancer survivorship in general? FCR comes under that umbrella of care but needs a separate discussion as it's quite unique and extensive. That being said, the title and the discussion don't seem to match.

I would encourage authors to modify either title or rewrite the article in a more focused way.

Reply 1: Thank you for your feedback. The main focus of this paper is not fear of cancer recurrence (FCR), but rather the broader psychosocial issues faced by breast cancer survivors. While FCR is an important aspect of survivorship care, our manuscript aims to comprehensively address various psychological challenges beyond the fear of recurrence. We have mentioned FCR in the text to

acknowledge its significance in survivorship, but we do not believe it warrants a separate section due to the scope and focus of this review.

Comment 2: I would recommend analyzing cancer survivors based on their pathology (if that's within the scope of this article). Early-stage BCS who required surgery only would face different levels and sets of symptoms compared to patients with metastatic cancer.

Reply 2: Thank you for your valuable suggestion. We appreciate your recommendation to analyze cancer survivors based on their pathology. However, due to limited published studies on this specific subject, it is not within the scope of this review article. Our manuscript aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the psychosocial issues faced by breast cancer survivors in general, rather than focusing on specific differences based on pathology.

Nevertheless, we agree that examining survivors based on their pathology would be an interesting avenue for further research. We highlighted in the conclusion that this topic warrants further investigation, especially regarding the varying levels and sets of symptoms experienced by early-stage BCS who required surgery only compared to patients with metastatic cancer.

“In addition, further research examining cancer survivors based on their pathology, including differences in symptom experiences between early-stage breast cancer patients who required surgery only and those with metastatic disease, is warranted. Understanding these variations can inform tailored psychosocial interventions and support strategies that address the diverse needs of breast cancer survivors across the survivorship trajectory.”

Comment 3: There's a detailed discussion of interventions and strategies. The authors should advise how to screen patients and an approach to intervention strategy based on symptomatology.

Reply 3: We appreciate your comment regarding the need for a detailed discussion on how to screen patients and intervention strategies based on symptomatology. We provided guidance on how to screen patients for distress and detailing an approach to intervention strategies aligned with symptomatology.

“By systematically assessing distress levels and associated symptoms, healthcare providers can tailor interventions that meet the specific needs of each patient. Evidence suggests that timely intervention for distress can lead to improved quality of life and better treatment outcomes. Therefore, implementing a structured approach to distress screening and intervention strategies based on symptomatology is essential in ensuring comprehensive care for breast cancer survivors.”