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Social support, accommodation to stress and adjustment to breast cancer

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Abstract

A woman's emotional adjustment to breast cancer is the focus of this study. The social support the woman experiences is predicted to affect the adjustment process by improving her ability to cope. Current clinical research indicates that background factors, such as marital status, age, SES and life change, also affect adjustment; these variables are incorporated into the model as controls. Using multiple regression analysis ($N=130$), the control variables are entered simultaneously with the indicators of social support to assess the independent effect of social support on adjustment. The relationship between social support, coping, and adjustment, as measured by psychological distress, self concept, and sense of power, is then examined. Two indicators of social support, perception of family cohesiveness and the amount of social contact have direct effects on coping and indirect effects on all three measures of adjustment, indicating that coping mediates the relationship between social support and

adjustment. Contrary to predictions, being employed and of higher social status have significant effects on adjustment when it is measured by either self concept or sense of power.



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