



Highlights from the 2024 Canadian Association of Nurses in Oncology Conference

The Canadian Association of Nurses in Oncology (CANO) held their Annual Conference in St. John's, Newfoundland on October 25-27, 2024. We've highlighted some key presentations, covering topics such as community support programs, male breast cancer, and research studies aimed at better understanding the patient experience and needs.

Use our blog on [Understanding Common Research Terms](#) as a guide for some of the terms we reference.

Impact of Breast Cancer on Women's Distress and Quality of Life

The PROgress Tracker Breast Cancer Registry by Breast Cancer Canada is collecting data on the impacts of breast cancer on patients' lives across Canada. This includes data on demographics (who is diagnosed), diagnostic information (stage, subtype, menopause status, etc.), global functioning (physical, mental, financial and emotional health), treatment details (types of treatment, rates of recurrence, or progression of metastases, etc.), and long-term impacts (lymphedema, neuropathy, bone density, etc.). As the first national registry covering all stages of breast cancer and accessible without a referral from a healthcare provider, it aims to use these insights to improve patient care. Initial results from the first three months show high levels of distress, with significant impacts on mental health, insomnia, and confidence in the management of their disease. Financial stability, especially for women under 55, is also a significant concern.

Oral Presentation by Doris Howell, PhD, Breast Cancer Canada Scientific Advisory Committee PROS Chair

If you're interested in learning more about participating in this study, visit www.progresstracker.ca.

YACC Recover Study – Quality of Life in Young Adults with Cancer

The Recover Study by Young Adult Cancer Canada (YACC) aims to understand how cancer affects the quality of life for young adults (under 40) in Canada over time. It will use surveys, interviews, and focus

groups to assess various aspects of living with cancer as a young adult. The study began in 2023 and has enrolled over 500 participants across the country, gathering insights on physical, emotional, social, and financial challenges. The goal is to enroll 2,000 people by 2025, ensuring diverse representation. The findings will guide the development of supportive programs tailored to young adults' unique needs during and after cancer treatment.

Poster Authors: Geoff Eaton, Karine Chalifour, Pam Crotty, Dani Taylor, Angie Barrington, Young Adult Cancer Canada; Sheila Garland, Memorial University of Newfoundland; Dr. Cheryl Heykoop, Royal Roads University

If you're interested in learning more about participating in this study, visit www.recoverstudy.ca.

Insights into the Cancer Patient Journey – South Asian Patients

A survey in British Columbia looked at the experiences of patients during their cancer journey. Researchers analyzed the experiences of 168 South Asian patients, particularly Panjabi Sikh immigrants, comparing how they rated their care compared to White patients and all other respondents. The survey explored areas such as access to care, physical comfort, communication, and emotional support. Findings showed that South Asian patients often rated their care as equal or better than other groups in areas like access to care, coordination of care, respect for patient preferences, information and emotional support. They reported challenges with trust, opportunity for family involvement in their care, and knowing who to contact for help. Due to the small sample size, the analysis was expanded to include anyone who identified as a visible minority, which showed declines in access to care, respect for patient preferences, and coordination of care.

Oral Presentation by Jagbir Kaur. MN, RN, CON(C), Clinical Nurse Specialist, BC Cancer

Body Image and Breast Cancer – A Photovoice Exploration

This presentation focused on how adults with breast cancer perceive body image and the potential gaps in healthcare providers' understanding of these concerns. The shift to phone-based care during the COVID-19 pandemic reduced opportunities for visual, in-person interaction, possibly leading to missed insights about patients' body image issues. The study uses "Photovoice," where participants take photos that represent their feelings about body image and discuss them in interviews. This method helps highlight deeply personal perspectives that traditional approaches might overlook. Collaborating with patient partners ensures that research questions reflect real concerns, adding depth and authenticity to the findings.

Poster Authors: Shauna Remin, Dr. Jae-Yung Kwon, Dr. Allie Slemon (PI), University of Victoria – School of Nursing

Male Breast Cancer

Male breast cancer is rare, making up about 1% of cases, but has significant impacts on those affected. A secondary analysis on coping strategies showed that men primarily relied on close relationships for support, although many preferred one-on-one help rather than group sessions. Men often receive less information about their condition, leading them to self-educate and become their own advocates. Openness about their disease was often driven by a desire to bring awareness to male breast cancer. Helpful coping strategies included finding a healthy work-life balance, adopting healthier lifestyle habits, and using task lists to stay motivated and engaged at home.

Oral Presentation by Erika Farris (BScN-Honors Program) & Zoë Kaplan (BScN-Honors Program), University of Alberta

Innovative Approach to Providing Community Cancer Support Programs

A survey of 500 cancer patients in New Brunswick highlighted a need for comprehensive support

programs that offer more than rehabilitation, aiming for a holistic approach. Horizon Health Network has prioritized programs like "Stay Strong", a free 12-week exercise program for adults with cancer, and a partnership with Wellspring Cancer Support to bring free in-person programs to communities in New Brunswick. These programs have been key to addressing the needs of those living with or recovering from cancer. Expansion continues based on community feedback and identified needs.

Oral Presentation by Elizabeth Rioux, MN, RN, BBA, Regional Director – Cancer Support Program, Horizon Health Network

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