Stress and Quality of Life for Adult Breast Cancer Patients

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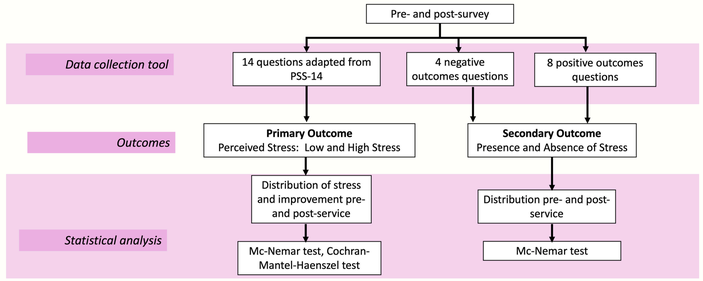
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Background

Breast cancer is associated with a combination of physical, psychological, and cognitive symptoms. This study seeks to explore the impact of linking supportive essential services offered by the Ellie Fund with psychosocial outcomes for breast cancer patients while undergoing treatment. It aims to provide evidence for a more holistic approach to cancer care that recognizes the interplay between medical treatment, social and finanfcial support, and quality of life.

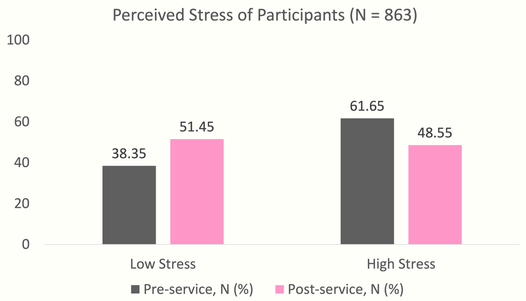
Methods

- Participants included 1,047 recipients of Ellie Fund services between 2019 and 2025.
- Participants were asked to complete a survey before and after receipt of Ellie Fund services; those who completed both surveys were analyzed.
- Services included grocery gift cards, delivered meals, transportation to medical appointments, childcare reimbursement, housekeeping, and integrative therapies, valued at $350/month: 3 months for Stages 0, 1, 2, and 3, and 6 months for Stage 4.
- Responses in the pre- and post-groups were compared and analyzed to assess for differences in stress levels and quality of life.



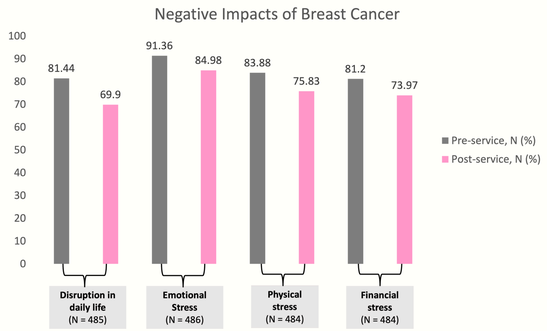
Results

Figure 1: Reduction in Perceived Stress



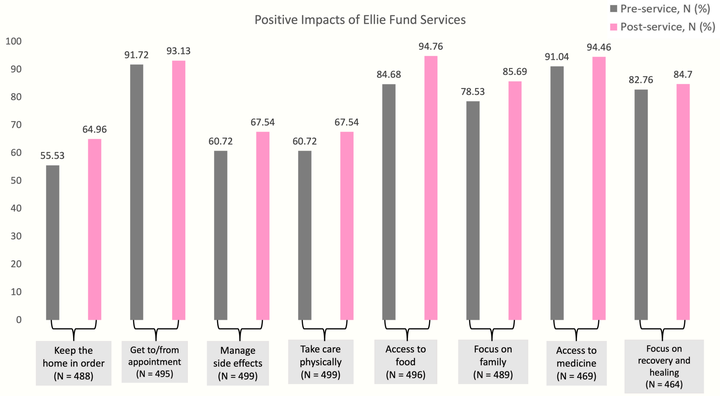
- Perceived high stress significantly decreased after receipt of services.
- The proportion of patients categorized with low stress increased 13% (38.4% pre-services to 51.5% post-service; p <0.05).
- The proportion of patients categorized with high stress dropped 13% (61.6% pre-services to 48.6% post-service; p <0.05).

Figure 2: Reduction in Negative Impacts



- Following delivery of services, there was a reduction in negative outcomes: less daily disruption, emotional strain, physical strain, and financial strain.
- The proportion of patients experiencing stress related to a disruption in daily life dropped 12% (81.4% pre-services to 69.9% post- service; p <0.05).

Figure 3: Increase in Positive Impacts



- Following delivery of services, there was an increase in all positive outcomes including greater ability to manage the household, take care of oneself, control treatment side-effects, focus on family, get to/from medical appointments, and access food/medicine.
- The proportion of patients categorized as having no stress related to taking care of oneself increased 7% (60.7% pre-services to 67.5% post-service; p <0.05).

Discussion

Stress during breast cancer treatment arises not only from disease progression but also from disruptions to daily life, financial strain, emotional trauma, and loss of control. By providing groceries, meals, transportation, housekeeping, partial childcare coverage, and integrative therapies, Ellie Fund reduces external stressors that would otherwise exacerbate patients' psychological burden. The magnitude of stress reduction was significanctly greater for non-metastatic patients; effects were consistent among racial and income groups.

Conclusion

Providing need-blind, non-medical assistance during breast cancer treatment demonstrates a positive impact across multiple parameters, suggesting that unconditional, whole-person support effectively reduces perceived stress and enhances quality of life for patients. Further research—e.g., 1-year follow-up and patient ability to complete treatment—are necessary to explore the specific mechanisms underlying these improvements and potential impact on patient clinical outcomes.