More than a number: Does the NCCN Distress Score Capture Key Social Determinants of Health Risks in Patients with Breast Cancer?

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Introduction

- Social determinants of health are known to impact time to diagnosis and access to treatment, leading to poorer outcomes and overall survival for cancer patients.
- The National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) Distress Thermometer (DT) is a validated screening tool used to assess, monitor, and document a patient's overall psychosocial distress score (DS).

Methods

- Patients at North St. Louis County Siteman Cancer Center in St. Louis, Missouri completed a 19 question, validated screening questionnaire with real time EMR integration via iPad that categorized them as "high risk" or "low risk" for individual SDOH factors based on responses. They also completed the NCCN DT, which provided a DS of 0-10.

Low Distress if <=4

High Distress if >4

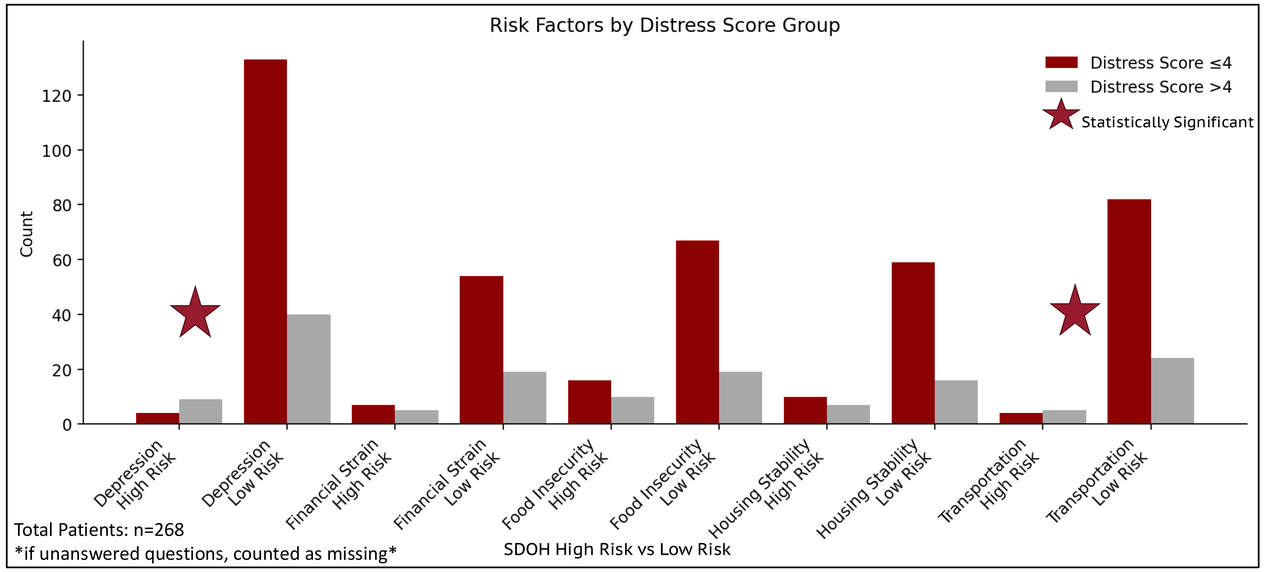
- We compared DS with risk category of several pertinent SDOH factors
- Statistical testing was performed using ANOVA, t-test, and chi square analysis.

- Financial Resource Strain
- Transportation Availability
- Depression
- Food Insecurity
- Housing Instability

Results

Patients at high risk for depression on SDOH screening had significantly higher reported DS than those who were at low risk (p=0.0003).

Patients at high risk for transportation difficulty were more likely to have a higher DS than those at low risk (p=0.03).



No significant association between risk of financial resource strain, food insecurity, or housing instability and DS

This study aims to identify if the NCCN Distress Thermometer captures key SDOH risks for patients with breast cancer.

Conclusion

- While the DT accurately identified pts with elevated scores for depression and transportation difficulty based on our SDOH screener as high risk, other key risk categories including financial resource strain, food insecurity, and housing instability had no association.
- Research has shown that these risk categories are linked to poorer outcomes.

Next Steps:

- As certain high risk SDOH factors were not identified based on the NCCN DT, there is a need for more granular screening of SDOH in clinical practice.
- Pilot with breast health patient navigator who will call patients prior to their first appointment to identify high risk patients to connect them with needed resources

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