Chinese women with breast cancer: Challenges, coping strategies and supportive care needs

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Why this research?

Breast cancer is the *most common* cancer facing Australian women.

17,586 ♂️ will be diagnosed in 2017

Estimated number of deaths in 2017 = 3,087 ♂️

Chance of living at least 5 years = 90%

Cancer raises complex physical, psychosocial, and health care challenges for all and these may be exacerbated for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) patients.
Significance and Aims

There is a significant need for culturally appropriate resources to assist CALD patients. Our previously developed intervention called *Coping-Together* can potentially help.

**Aims:** To undertake a qualitative study to explore:

a. **experiences** of Chinese women diagnosed with breast cancer

b. **information** required to achieve suitable self-management skills
Methodology

Patients \((n=26)\) participated in a **semi-structured interview** or a **focus group**, conducted in the participants’ preferred language.

**Recruitment Sources:** CanRevive & Liverpool Cancer Therapy Centre.

Data were analysed using **thematic analysis**.
Results

The interviews and focus groups revealed **five** distinct themes:

**Social Support**

Protecting others from diagnosis:

“I know my mother’s character. She would just cry non-stop for a few months … I just don’t want her to be sad and it would be harmful to her health.”

**Information Seeking**

English vs. Chinese resources:

“(I) finished reading the Chinese ones quickly because after all, it was in our own language. After reading the explanations, we understood more about our illness.”
Results Continued.

**Language barriers in health care settings**

Unreliability of interpreter services:

“my son had to say to the interpreter, “sorry, can you stop interpreting please? We’ll speak for ourselves.” He immediately heard that the interpretations were incorrect.”

**Psychosocial impact**

Experience with cancer:

“a malicious sickness,” “very unsettling, very unhappy, very scared,” “a sad cloud over my sky,” and “a great stress inside my heart”.

**Challenges and coping behaviours**

Use of traditional Chinese medicine:

“it’s the problem of lymphoedema because we had breast cancer. Practising Tai Chi will improve the movement of the arms and prevent oedema.”
Conclusions

Same Same…
• Basic need for *information*
• Access to *psychosocial care*

…But Different
• *Coping* behaviours
• *Information* seeking behaviours
• Engagement with *health care professionals*
Thank you.

Questions and/or Comments?

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