

48 Rural–Urban Disparities in Psychosocial and Financial Well-Being among Young Adult Cancer Survivors: A Yacprime Study

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1. Background/Rationale or Objectives/Purpose

Rural-dwelling cancer survivors tend to report worse quality of life compared to urban-dwelling cancer survivors, including worse disease severity, greater mood disturbance, and financial burden. Young adult (YA) cancer survivors may be similarly susceptible to the psychosocial and financial difficulties of cancer. Few studies examine rural–urban differences among YAs.

2. Methodology or Methods

The Young Adults with Cancer in their Prime (YACPRIME) study recruited YA cancer survivors aged 15 to 39 years. Participants completed the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10), Short Form Health Survey–12 (SF-12), Medical Outcomes Study Social Support Survey, and select survey questions on time off, connection to the YA community, out of pocket expenses, debts, assets, and ability to afford unexpected expenses. Independent samples *t*-tests and chi-squared tests examined group differences among variables. Hierarchical regressions examined moderators of the rurality–distress relationship.

3. Impact on Practice or Results

Twenty-five percent of participants (N = 508) reported they lived in a rural or remote area. The total sample had a mean age of 32.2 years (SD = 4.8). Rural-dwelling YA cancer survivors reported significant worse distress ($t(468) = 2.82, p = 0.005, d = 0.30$) and perceived physical health ($t(396) = -2.06, p = 0.04, d = 0.23$) than their urban-dwelling peers. Lower social support moderates experiences of elevated distress among rural YAs ($\beta = -0.19, 95\% \text{ CI } (-0.155, -0.004), p = 0.04$).

4. Discussion or Conclusions

Cancer care programs and providers must consider the unique concerns of YAs with cancer who live in rural areas. Treatment for rural-dwelling YAs with cancer may focus on connecting YAs with appropriate support networks.