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Existential Meaning Making among Breast Cancer Survivors

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## Abstract

This research endeavors to explore meaning in life of breast cancer survivors in India using narrative analysis. The participants were interviewed to obtain a holistic view of their experiences in their own words. Interview data were analyzed using Narrative Analysis. The narratives indicated that the participant's journey started with their attitude towards death guided by fate, their goal/purpose in life; gradually adapting with changes through self-positive reminiscences, immortality and the process of meaning making leading them to inner peace and satisfaction. The 'will to live' was found to be central issue in recovery and survival. The renewed meaning was strongly mediated by cosmic factors (God and 'Karma'), increased religiosity and strong support systems that are specifically perceived as responsible for the recovery and facilitating hope and resilience. The present psycho-oncology study has implications for social and mental health workers in designing intervention programs to counsel women and psycho-educate the caregivers from initial time of diagnosis to various stages of cancer which would go a long way to help them discover ways of strengthening and sustaining their motivation with a 'will to live'.

Keywords: Breast Cancer Survivors. Meaning Making. Narrative Analysis. Psycho-oncology.