



PATHWAYS

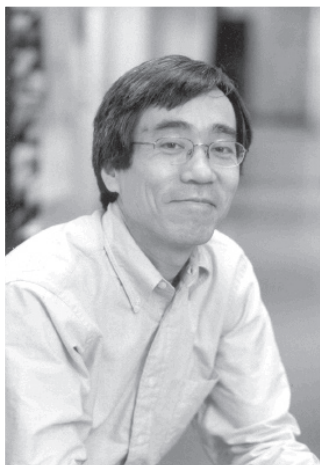
A Study of Breast Cancer Survivorship

A NEWSLETTER FOR STUDY PARTICIPANTS

FALL 2009

From the Principal Investigator's Corner

by Larry Kushi, ScD



Greetings from the staff of the Pathways Study! As you can see elsewhere in this newsletter, we have now enrolled over 2,800 women in this study. While some of you have been with us for over three years, others will have just joined the study in the past few weeks. We continue to appreciate and honor your participation in this study.

The Pathways study is designed as a prospective cohort study. A cohort is the study population – the 2,800 and counting of you who have agreed to participate in the study. It is prospective, meaning that we are now following your experience with breast cancer with periodic, updated interviews and questionnaires. The scientific value of the study increases as more women agree to participate in the study, and just as importantly, as you continue to provide us with updated information about your choices when we contact you. Since it will take several years to obtain information on outcomes from your breast cancer diagnosis, the importance of your continued participation cannot be overstated.

As you probably know, this study is currently funded through June 30, 2010, as the National Cancer

Institute usually provides funding for studies for a time frame of up to five years. We submitted an application for a grant to continue the study for an additional five years, which would allow us to increase the number of women enrolled in the study, follow your experiences for a longer period of time, and generate information that will help us understand how lifestyle choices affect how women do after a diagnosis of breast cancer. The application received an encouraging review, in no small part due to your willingness to participate in the study. However, whether its evaluation is in the “fundable” range is not clear. Thus, we are planning to resubmit this application in November, and hope to receive a clear indication that we will be funded for an additional five years. We hope to continue this ongoing relationship with you as we learn from your experiences as a breast cancer survivor.

In the meantime, we have begun to publish several papers that describe you, our study population. In past issues of this newsletter, for example, we have highlighted our interests in studying complementary and alternative medicine and lymphedema. We published a paper this past May describing complementary and alternative therapy use among our first 1,000 Pathways Study participants in the journal, *Breast Cancer Research and Treatment*. In the paper, we note that a large majority of you report use of some therapy that can be described as complementary and alternative, with almost half reporting use of botanical supplements or other natural products in the period soon after diagnosis for breast cancer. More recently, a paper describing factors related to the likelihood of developing lymphedema among these early Pathways Study participants was accepted for publication in the

Happy Holidays
from the
Pathways Staff

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Pathways Update – Who Is Participating?

**BASELINE
INTERVIEW**
2,904 completed

**6 MONTH
FOLLOW-UP**
1,700 completed

**12 MONTH
FOLLOW-UP**
1,829 completed

**24 MONTH
FOLLOW-UP**
786 completed

We are grateful for your role in Pathways. All of you add meaning and diversity to our team, and contribute your unique perspective to the information we are gathering. Thank you for participating. ☒



Pathways Staff
Kaiser Permanente
Division of Research

Faces of Pathways



KALLIOPE BELLESIS

has been an Interviewer with Pathways for 2 years. Food, travel and music are her passions. She is a singer with four recordings to her name, Opie Bellas. She also competes in the United States Tennis Association. She and her partner of 15 years live in Oakland.

JANISE KIM

joined as the Pathways project manager in June 2009. She has a background in social work and public health. She enjoys traveling, exploring new restaurants, and spending time with girlfriends and family.



JULIE MUNNEKE

has been the field staff manager since June 2006. She enjoys running, biking and bikram yoga. She is a proud new step-mom of three young people, ages 9, 14 and 20.

ELINETTE NICOLAS-HEARN

is a field interviewer for the Sacramento and outlying area. She loves to spend her free time traveling with her family as well as playing tennis and practicing Pilates.



From the Principal Investigator's Corner Continued from Page 1

journal *Archives of Surgery*. We found, for example, that removal of more lymph nodes as part of surgery increases the likelihood of developing lymphedema.



You can read our already published papers by going to the study website at www.dor.kaiser.org/external/pathways.aspx and clicking on publications.

I would like to acknowledge the ongoing dedication of our Pathways Study research team to the success of our study. Our recruiters and interviewers are our link to you, our study participants, and they are a warm, dedicated group of individuals. The team members working in the office process the questionnaires and other information you provide. These combined activities are a vital link between your participation and the generation of knowledge that we publish, which will hopefully improve the manner in which we care for women with breast cancer. This study could not be done without the combined efforts of you, our study participants, and our dedicated research team members.



We look forward realistically and optimistically to receiving funding to continue the study for an additional five years – and beyond – so that we can continue to forge new knowledge to help women with breast cancer in the years to come.



Staff Follow-Up: Althea Crichlow

Althea loves food and is interested in mental and physical

health. The Pathways Study and the many beautiful women that she

had the pleasure of interviewing while a part of the study gave Althea even greater insight into how the mind, body, food, and health are connected. In September Althea continued her path of learning by entering a master's program in nutrition at Columbia University. We wish her well.



For the most up to date information on the Pathways study, please visit our website at its new address:

www.dor.kaiser.org/external/pathways.aspx

New Contact Information?

In order to keep in touch with you we must have your latest contact information. Please let us know if your phone number or home address has changed. You can reach us by calling our toll-free number, **1-866-206-2979.**



