



PATHWAYS

A Study of Breast Cancer Survivorship

A NEWSLETTER FOR STUDY PARTICIPANTS

Fall 2011

Physical Activity and Quality of Life in Pathways Study Participants

by Allegra W. Timperi and Marilyn L. Kwan, PhD

After receiving a breast cancer diagnosis, many women want to know if there are lifestyle changes that will improve their prognosis, overall health, and quality of life. One goal of the Pathways study is to determine how lifestyle factors affect the quality of life of breast cancer survivors. Physical activity can improve quality of life in breast cancer survivors, but most studies have examined physical activity and quality of life after the completion of breast cancer treatment. Thus, little is known about associations of physical activity and quality of life early in the breast cancer experience. Many of you probably remember that we ask for detailed information on different activities you do, such as exercise and household chores, during our baseline interview and mailed follow-ups. We also ask you questions about various aspects of your quality of life at these time points. We used the information provided in the baseline interviews of 2,279 Pathways participants to examine the relationship between physical activity levels and quality of life, and our analysis was recently published in *Breast Cancer Research and Treatment*¹.



We found that Pathways women were very active, reporting a median of 20.2 metabolic equivalent hours of moderate or vigorous activity per week during the period from just before diagnosis through the early phase of treatment. This amount of activity is similar to walking briskly for about 5 hours per week. More physical activity was associated with better physical, social, and functional well-being, as well as with enhanced general well-being and well-being related to breast cancer specific issues.

This means that as physical activity increased, so did well-being in these quality of life measures. The only quality of life scale that was not related to physical activity was emotional well-being. Overall, quality of life was significantly higher for women in the top 25% of moderate and vigorous activity compared to women in the bottom 25%.

After accounting for factors that might explain the relationship between physical activity and quality of life, such as certain demographic information and types of cancer treatment, higher activity was still related to better overall quality of life and functional well-being. Although younger women reported higher activity levels, older women reported better quality of life. White women also reported higher levels of activity than minority women, and activity was related to quality of life for White women but not for minority women. This finding suggests that



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Physical Activity and Quality of Life in Pathways Study Participants *continued:*

minority women may have different experiences during breast cancer treatment than White women. Although this observation needs to be examined further, it may be important for research into health disparities and quality of life in breast cancer survivors.

As our study progresses, we will examine how physical activity affects the prognosis of women with breast cancer. We thank all Pathways Study participants like yourself for the information you have given us about your physical activity and quality of life, and we encourage you to continue providing information through the periodic follow-ups. If you would like a copy of this paper, please contact the Pathways Study Coordinating Center at 1-866-206-2979. The study abstract is also available through the Pathways website: <http://pathways.kaiser.org>.

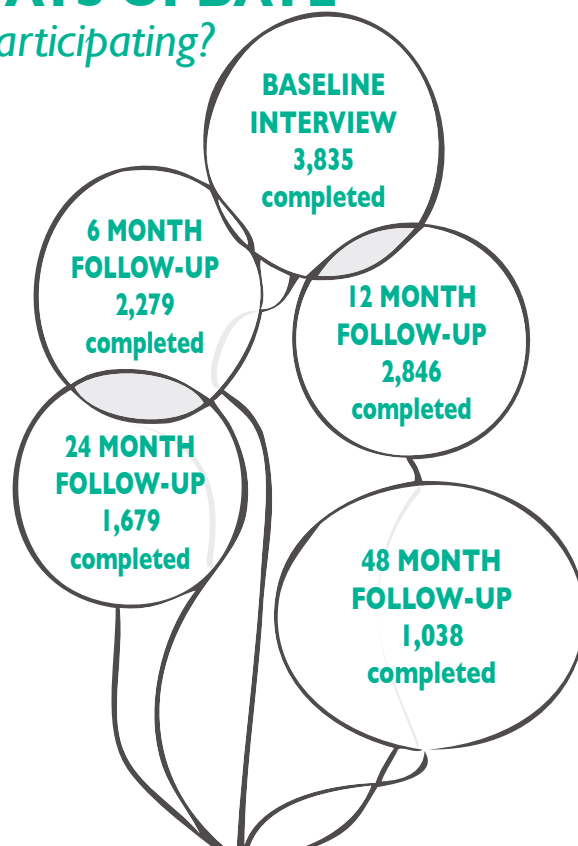


¹Mandelblatt JS, Luta G, Kwan ML, et al. Associations of physical activity with quality of life and functional ability in breast cancer patients during active adjuvant treatment: the Pathways Study. *Breast Cancer Res Treat* 2011;129(2):521-9. ☒

Announcing the Beginning of our 6-Year (72-month) Follow-up!

We are pleased to announce that starting in January 2012, we will begin mailing our 6-year (72-month) follow-up questionnaire to eligible study participants. The 6-year follow-up will ask women for updates on various lifestyle factors and psychosocial measures as part of the long-term cancer survivorship experience. As many of you already know, our study funding was renewed for another five years in 2010, which has allowed us to continue enrolling women and to extend follow-up with our existing participants. As always, each of your unique experiences is irreplaceable, and will offer insight to what breast cancer survivors can do to maintain their health after treatment. As we continue to collect new information, we are continuing to examine the lifestyle information you have given us over the past few years and will continue sharing our study results with you in upcoming newsletters. We know how valuable your time is, and are grateful for your contributions to our study. As you can see from our numbers, we have now enrolled over 3,800 participants. Once again, we thank you for being a valuable member of the Pathways Study!

PATHWAYS UPDATE *Who Is Participating?*



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! ☒



Marilyn Kwan

Marilyn is the lead co-investigator of the Pathways Study, and has been with the study since its beginnings in 2005. She is a cancer epidemiologist who received her PhD from UC Berkeley. Marilyn's devotion to Pathways comes from the fact that many

women are now living longer and healthier lives after breast cancer, and thus more research is needed in the area of cancer survivorship. In her free time, she enjoys taking her young daughter and son to the park, watching movies with her husband, and playing the violin. She looks forward to teaching her kids the piano or violin, or supporting whichever instrument they prefer to play!

Ricca Manalo

Ricca has been an intern with the Pathways Study for the past two summers. She is currently an undergraduate student at the University of California, Santa Cruz, and working toward a BA in Environmental Studies. Go slugs! When she is not helping with the Pathways Study or recycling, she enjoys playing volleyball, reading, and going to concerts.



Katie Mayers

Katie joined Pathways as a field interviewer in June of 2011 for the Oakland to Walnut Creek region. As a native New Yorker, with a BA in Psychology and a MA in Anthropology, Katie thrives on meeting participants and hearing their stories of

strength and diversity of experience in their treatment decisions and lives. It is a privilege to get to know these amazing women!

Sara Lee

Sara is our newest interviewer for the Sacramento area.

Originally from the Chicago suburbs, Sara is also working toward a Master of Public Health degree through Des Moines University. Recently, Sara has gotten into sewing and handcrafting gifts for family and friends. Welcome Sara!



Staff Follow-Up

Sana Irfan



Sana recently started a 5-year Master of Science/Doctor of Osteopathy program at Western University of Health Sciences in Pomona, CA. She has had the opportunity to take challenging and fun classes, and to give back to the community by volunteering at health fairs in an

effort to provide people with tools to better manage their health. She truly misses the talented Pathways team as well as the diverse and resilient women she had the pleasure of working with. Her experiences on Pathways remain an important part of her journey and she is thankful to have learned from all of the participants. ☒

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

<http://pathways.kaiser.org> ☒

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. ☒



**Happy Holidays
from the Pathways
Study Staff!**



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