



PATHWAYS

A Study of Breast Cancer Survivorship

A NEWSLETTER FOR STUDY PARTICIPANTS

Fall 2012

Working and Quality of Life After Breast Cancer

by Allegra (Timperi) Wilson

Other research has shown that breast cancer survivors are less likely to be employed than similar healthy women, yet effects of employment on the well-being of survivors are largely unknown. Many of you, our valued Pathways participants, will recall that we ask you questions about how much you work or participate in volunteer activities as part of our baseline and follow-up interviews. We recently used this information, along with your responses to quality of life questions, to examine the relationship between working and well-being after breast cancer diagnosis. We performed a number of analyses, which included information from your baseline interview and the 6-month follow-up.



At baseline, we found that overall well-being was higher for women who worked at least some hours per week compared with women who were not working at all. Women working 1–19 hours per week at baseline also had higher functional well-being compared with women who were not working. Functional well-being

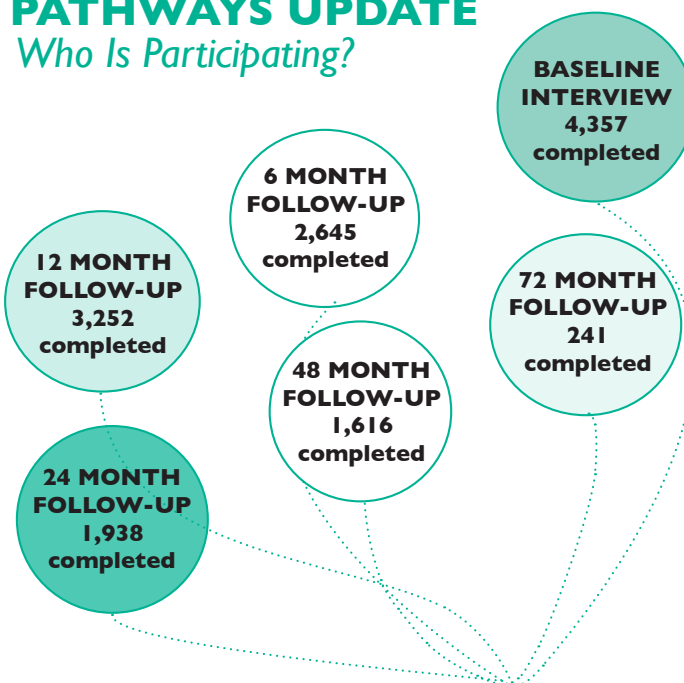
includes areas such as being able to enjoy life and sleeping well. We also found a positive association between number of hours worked per week and physical and social well-being, meaning that as hours worked per week increased, so did physical and social well-being. Physical well-being includes areas such as the level of pain and nausea you are experiencing, while social well-being includes areas such as feeling close to friends and receiving emotional support from your family. At the 6-month follow-up we found that women working at least 20 hours per week had higher physical and functional well-being than those who were not working. We also found that women who stopped working between the baseline interview and the 6-month follow-up had lower scores for physical and functional well-being compared to

women who continued working during this time.

Of course, every woman faces different opportunities and decisions related to employment, and there is no right or wrong path to take. We hope that you will find the results of this analysis interesting as you continue along the path of cancer survivorship. This study has been published ([Employment status and quality of life in recently diagnosed breast cancer survivors](#), “*Psycho-Oncology*”, Epub 2012 Aug 22), however the paper is not yet available online. We would be happy to send you a copy of the paper, just call our toll free number, **1-866-206-2979**, and leave your name and address along with your request for a paper. ☒



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! ☒

Celebrating Janet Thiessen



Janet Thiessen passed away in June of this year. Janet started as an interviewer with the Pathways Study in March of 2006. Janet was a native of Marin County, a knowledgeable volunteer birder for the Napa-Solano Audubon Society, and a recently published author of the book *"Dorothy Erskine, Graceful Crusader for Our*

Environment". Janet's previous work experiences with other health and research organizations such as the University of California, Berkeley, School of Public Health and University of California, San Francisco, in addition to her experience as a former real estate agent, and being a breast cancer survivor herself, all informed her abilities and interest in working with Pathways Study participants. She was an enthusiastic and valued member of our study team, and we miss her.

Contributions in Janet's memory may be made to the Napa-Solano Audubon Society, PO Box 10006, Napa CA 94581. ☒

72-Month (6-Year) Follow-up

The 72-month (6-year) follow-up continues collecting information about your lifestyle. Some of the questions will already be familiar to you, such as questions on diet, multivitamin use, physical activity, social measures, and body size measurement. Other questions are new, and designed to learn more about your religion, spirituality, and neighborhood environment.

There are different ways you can get involved with the 72-month follow-up! You can participate through our mailed questionnaires, over the phone, or through the web. When you reach the 72-month time-point, we will mail you a packet of questionnaires. The packet will also contain information on how you can log-in to the web survey or call for a phone interview.

Of course, the Pathways interviewer in your area and the office staff are here to help you!

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to call our toll free number, 1-866-206-2979. We are here to assist you in any way possible. ☒



*Happy Holidays from
the Pathways Study Staff!*

Pathways Collaborators

Marion Lee

This Pathways Study has been going on for 8 years now; you as study participants, and we as investigators, are forming a bond which is so precious. I am delighted to be part of this bonding chain. Many of you may not know me; I am a professor of Epidemiology at University of California, San Francisco, and also at Stanford Medical School with a special interest in Nutrition and Integrative Medicine. I have devoted my research to breast cancer epidemiological studies for over 20 years. Most of my research has been involved with multiple ethnicities, and in different continents; especially with comparative etiological studies of cancer in China and in the US, and in China as well as in Taiwan. In these studies, we did find that some environmental attributes, especially dietary factors, contribute to cancer development in ethnic Chinese and other ethnic groups.



I have been a co-investigator on Pathways since the beginning of the study, and I was responsible for including the aspect of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM). Surprisingly, we found over 90% of you had used one form or another of CAM before diagnosis as shown in our paper, which can be read here: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2991094/> Some other studies have suggested that use of botanical supplements may be associated with decreased risk of recurrence or death. We would like to examine this CAM question, along with other questions on lifestyle factors, in the Pathways Study. We believe lifestyle modification can possibly make a difference in breast cancer prognosis and survival, and hope we can provide preventive strategies for future generations of women with breast cancer. But we need scientific evidence to substantiate our hypotheses. I want to thank each of you, our Pathway members, for your continued support and participation. With your effort, we will continue to advance our knowledge in fighting against breast cancer. ☒

New Contact Information?

In order to keep in touch with you, we need 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. ☒



Faces of Pathways

Allegra (formerly Timperi) Wilson

Allegra was a senior research assistant who left Pathways this past June to pursue a degree in Speech-Language Pathology at Boston University. Since returning to her hometown, she has had much excitement in her life, including getting married, and the birth of her first niece. Although school is keeping her busy, she has been enjoying spending more time with her family and swimming in the ocean (it's warmer than Bay Area beaches!). ☒



Emily Tam

Emily was a senior research assistant for Pathways. She has recently transitioned to go back to school at University of California, Los Angeles, School of Medicine. When school gets tough, she reminds herself of the amount of perseverance the Pathways participants have, which motivates her to keep studying



hard to become a great doctor! ☒

Sara Lee

Sara was an interviewer for Pathways in the Sacramento area. She has moved on to Massachusetts to be with her fiancée and complete her graduate school program in public health. She is enjoying exploring the east coast, and looks forward to new adventures- with her career, with new surroundings, and with wedding planning. ☒



Abby Cajudo

Abby is Pathways' newest research assistant. She graduated from University of California, Berkeley with a degree in Integrative Biology and a minor in Education. She is interested in pursuing a career in public health and is excited to join the Pathways Study. In her free time, Abby loves to cook, hike, and travel. ☒



Pathways Babies

Nshan & Jano



Nshan is three years old. Nshan has a new baby brother now, Jano, born 10/17/12! His father, Isaac Ergas, is a programmer for the Pathways Study and a filmmaker in Los Angeles. ☒

Cordelia and Ronin



Cordelia and Ronin are now five and three years old, respectively. Their mother, Marilyn Kwan, is a co-investigator on the Pathways Study. ☒

Sophia



Sophia is one year old. Her mother, Janise Roh, is the project manager for the Pathways Study. ☒



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