

A Qualitative Cultural Sensitivity Assessment of the Breathe Easier Mobile Application for Lung Cancer Survivors and Their Families

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PURPOSE: To evaluate the cultural sensitivity of the Breathe Easier mobile health application for African American lung cancer survivors and their families. Breathe Easier is an intervention designed to teach strategies to combat symptoms related to lung cancer.

PARTICIPANTS & SETTING: 12 African American lung cancer survivors and their family members were recruited from an American College of Surgeons–approved cancer program in South Carolina.

METHODOLOGIC APPROACH: Participants completed in-depth interviews, which were guided by the Cultural Sensitivity Assessment Tool and the Cultural Sensitivity Checklist. Two researchers performed open and axial coding to conceptually organize the data.

FINDINGS: Multiple culturally relevant themes emerged, including benefits, concerns, and suggestions related to content literacy and inclusiveness, as well as acceptability of and motivations for using the mobile application. However, lung cancer survivors and their family members reported being more concerned about accessing accurate survivorship information.

IMPLICATIONS FOR NURSING: Attention to health literacy, eHealth literacy, and cultural sensitivity may enhance patient outcomes, and nurses can advocate for patients regarding these communication issues.

KEYWORDS cancer survivors; African Americans; mobile applications; culture; health communications
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Cultural sensitivity is the extent to which health information materials accommodate cultural, historical, environmental, social, and psychological factors or values (Barrera et al., 2013). Culture is a key driver of cancer outcomes because of its influence on values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors related to prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and survivorship (Kagawa-Singer et al., 2010). Previous research has shown that the cultural beliefs of African Americans may affect how and to what extent they participate in their lung cancer care (Jonnalagadda et al., 2012; Lin et al., 2014). According to Jonnalagadda et al. (2012), ethnic minorities, including African Americans, may have more fatalistic views and misconceptions about cancer than Caucasians, which can affect whether they receive timely and adequate treatment. Developing community-driven interventions that address the cultural beliefs and heritage of African Americans can improve their response to cancer communication interventions (Huang & Shen, 2016) and enhance patient–provider communication (Li et al., 2017). Culturally sensitive interventions are warranted for African American lung cancer survivors and their family members in particular because of their higher rate of lung cancer mortality (Siegel et al., 2019) and poorer survivorship outcomes (Bryant & Cerfolio, 2008; Chang et al., 2016).

Background

Lung cancer is the second most common and deadliest cancer in the United States, accounting for more than one-fourth of all cancer-related deaths (Siegel et al., 2019). However, African Americans experience the highest mortality (64%) and have lower five-year survival rates (18%) than Caucasians (54% mortality and