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Who Cares for the Caregivers: How Being a Caregiver Impacts Cancer Survivorship



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Introduction

With an aging population, informal caregiving is rising and is the predominant way for people with chronic illnesses to receive care. Providing care for someone with a chronic illness can take a toll on the caregiver. Caregivers often develop their own chronic illnesses such as cancer. Compared to Whites, Latinx cancer survivors and their families experience disproportionate adverse effects of cancer and cancer therapy as a result of physical, emotional, and financial challenges. This highlights racial/ethnic disparity in cancer survivorship. Due to the interwoven relationship between caregiver and the care recipient, both parties are at risk if the caregiver is no longer able to provide care. This study is part of a larger study evaluating the cancer survivorship experience of Blacks and Latinx people in Rhode Island.

Methods

- Community participatory purposive sampling approach
- Five Latinx participants were interviewed during the summer 2022
 - 3 Latinx cancer survivors and
 - 2 Latinx cancer survivors who are caregivers
- Semi-structured interviews in Spanish
- Responses were transcribed and analyzed for themes

Table 1. Findings from participants who identified as Caregiver and Cancer Survivor

Themes	Quotes
Institutional Invisibility	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. "Every day people talk about cancer patients, but they don't talk about the one who takes care of the cancer patient" (CS16)2. "That they put more effort into an organization that can provide the Hispanic, the Latino, the immigrant, that he/she is not alienated, that he/she is not left out, that he/she has everything, mainly, that he/she has the support of someone" (CS4)
Resource Insecurity	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. "She told me that if I had no help, why didn't I go back to my country"(CS4)2. "And so, I think she was very--I don't know if it was on purpose or if she didn't know, it's incomprehensible that she didn't know that free community services existed, that I could ask for help, when all the hospitals have it" (CS10)
Burden and Isolation	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. "When I feel sad, when I want to cry, I go to my room, I try to hide it, because he can't see me like that, he gets upset, and neither can my mother" (CS16)2. "Cancer makes you feel like you are bothering people and can be a financial struggle" (CS4).

Discussion/Conclusion

This population has several intersectionalities including Latinx, immigrants, socio-economically disadvantaged cancer patients. They each have to learn to advocate for their care and battle the system when necessary. The healthcare institution resources are not inclusive to non-english speaking, non-native born patients. Our findings draw attention to the need for tailored interventions designed for Latinx cancer survivors and caregivers. Future research should work to detail this experience so that we may better assist Latinx caregivers and survivorship experience.