

RESEARCH BRIEF

Family communication and coping among racial-ethnic minority cancer patients: A systematic review

Authored by: Yu-Ju Huang; Chiara Acquati; Monit Cheung

Open and constructive family communication contributes to effective individual and family coping with cancer in the minoritized populations.

Why is this research important?

- Cancer prevention and survival rate improved. However, cancer disparities by race and ethnicity continue to affect mortality rates and quality of care.
- Family communication significantly influences cancer patients' coping, quality of life, and emotional well-being.
- The importance of family relationships is well established; however, limited evidence is available to testify the association between family communication and coping strategies enacted by survivors from minoritized groups.
- This review synthesized research on family communication and coping among the three largest racial-minority populations (i.e., Black/African American, Asian/Asian American, and Hispanic/Latinx) in the United States.

Who was part of this study and how was the research conducted?

- The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses Statement (PRISMA) was followed to analyze articles from five databases (CINAHL, MEDLINE, PsycINFO, PubMed, Web of Science).
- Peer-reviewed empirical studies published in English between 2008 and 2021 were reviewed.
- Studies included in this review investigated the relationship between family communication, coping, and patient-reported outcomes among the three targeted minoritized groups.
- The communication focused on exchanges between patients, and their immediate family, including spouse, significant others, romantic partners, child(ren), siblings, and parents.
- A total of 117 articles were identified, of which 9 met the inclusion criteria.

What did we find?

- Empirical evidence about the nature and contribution of family communication to the coping process is sparse.
- Family communication and coping styles varied across the minoritized groups.
- Family communication in the context of racial-ethnic minoritized groups is characterized by three interconnected aspects: function (empowerment), attitude (optimism), and action (responsibility).

Action steps for educators

- Culturally informed practice guides practitioners to better understand unique needs/challenges, coping strategies development, and the long-term well-being of minority cancer patients and their families.
- Cancer disparity among minoritized populations should be promoted and advocate healthcare justice for the underserved populations.

[Read The Article Here](#)

ABOUT THE RESEARCHER

This study was conducted by three researchers from the Graduate College of Social Work. Yu-Ju Huang is Doctoral Candidate leading this project. Her social work clinical experiences in medical centers and community accumulated her research concentrations focusing on stress management, coping mechanism development, communication, mental health, and complementary and integrative long-term care among individuals with cancer. In addition, her research is involved in social determinants of health and health disparities/inequities in immigrants and minorities to advocate healthcare justice for underserved populations.

Contact Information: Yu-Ju Huang; yhuang36@central.uh.edu / yujuhuang2013@gmail.com