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CHAIR: *Sid Saltzstein, M.D., M.P.H.*
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A LONGITUDINAL STUDY OF PSYCHO-SOCIAL COPING
AND SENSE OF CONTROL IN WOMEN DIAGNOSED WITH BREAST CANCER

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Tom Kurosaki, M.S.; Jim McQuade, M.D.

In a previous study, a cross-sectional control profile of women recently diagnosed with breast cancer was assessed. This current study follows up on these initial data by determining their control profile and psycho-social status four months later. The group as a whole showed a significant increase in their quality of life score, and a significant decrease in reliance on "others" as a source of a sense of control. There was also an overall decrease in anxiety and depression. However, their health lifestyle was significantly lower, particular in the area of exercise. Further, a comparison of time one and time two showed that 12 areas continued to remain a concern for over 40 % of the individuals, and a new concern, sexuality, was a concern of nearly 50% at time two. More detailed investigation revealed that on the Shapiro Control Inventory, 25.4% of individuals had the same number of scales/items in a non-psychologically healthy direction at time one and time two, 32.2% showed an increase in the number of scales/items in a non-psychologically healthy direction and 42.3% showed a decrease in the number of scales/items in a non-psychologically healthy direction. These shifts were not related to the severity of the disease. Adaptation and coping styles to maintain a sense of control were consistent for 60% of the individuals, but the remaining 40% showed bi-directional shifts from and to "self-efforts" and "other efforts." The discussion focuses on the intriguing question of why some individuals improve, some stay the same, and some move in a less psychologically healthy direction.