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Adjustment of Children and Their Mothers with Breast Cancer

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Abstract

Objective To examine the adjustment of children of mothers with both active and nonactive breast cancers in comparison with a healthy community control sample. **Methods** Participants included 80 mothers and their children. Half of the mothers had breast cancer or a history of breast cancer. Children in both groups ranged in age from 8 to 19 years. Assessments included measures of maternal stressors and resources, maternal and child adjustment and posttraumatic stress, and maternal coping and illness uncertainty reported by both mothers and their children. **Results** Few differences were found between the groups, although there was a trend for girls of mothers with breast cancer to have a higher frequency of depressive symptoms. Children of mothers who perceived support from friends and family had fewer

depressive symptoms, after we controlled for child gender. **Conclusions** The social support perceived by mothers with breast cancer may serve as a protective factor for their children's psychological adjustment.

Key words: adjustment; breast cancer; social support.

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