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A Comparison Between Cancer Survivors and Their Spouses on Perceived Depression and Marriage Quality

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Often in research regarding the cancer population, the individual's marital status reflects mixed reviews. A cancer diagnosis does not only impact the life of the patient, but also the lives of their family members, more specifically a spouse. This posed concern for what characteristics of a relationship may be most adequate for greatest potential through the cancer journey and beyond.

PURPOSE: The primary objective if this study was to determine whether there was a correlation between perceived depression and relationship quality between couples where at least one individual had been diagnosed with cancer during the course of the relationship. **METHODS:** Fifteen individuals diagnosed with an array of cancer types, and a mean time since diagnosis of 106.7 months, and their partners ($n = 15$) were assessed by questionnaires with regard to depression (Center for Epidemiologic Scale-Depression, CES-D) and relationship quality (Dyadic Adjustment Scale, DAS). **RESULTS** As hypothesized, there was a strong negative association between depression and marital adjustment scores, $r = -0.495$, $p < 0.05$ with no mean difference in psychological distress and marital quality comparison of cancer survivors and their partners. **DISCUSSION:** The findings indicate that cancer survivors' and their spouses' have a similar feeling in regards to psychological distress and marital quality. Generally, marital satisfaction appears it could be a potential moderator in psychological distress.