Jessica Tandy and E-Liisa Laakso

Abstract: Oncology Nurses Group Conference, 2010

There is increasing evidence to suggest that the health outcomes of breast cancer survivors may be optimised by interventions which, in addition to conventional medical treatments, emphasize physical activity, maintenance of BMI within 21-23, limited ingestion of energy-dense foods and drinks and psychosocial health. Furthermore, research suggests that the primary desire of cancer survivors is to have access to such lifestyle interventions. To date, barriers to access have been primarily geographical, socioeconomic and attitudinal, and are reflected in relative survival rates. These barriers must, therefore, be overcome to facilitate optimal patient outcomes. Preliminary evidence for web-based interventions demonstrates strong potential for this educational medium, however, little is known regarding; the potential to elicit positive, sustainable behavioural and psychosocial changes; the validity of the user’s perception of these changes; the utility of interacting with a web-based, educational tool.

We describe the development of a secure, on-line, interactive device for breast cancer patients to: (1) engage in evidence-based educational information regarding exercise, physical activity and diet; (2) assess self-report data pertaining to physical and psychosocial health outcomes. The Healthy Outcomes for Australians web site was constructed with a central framework incorporating interactive user personal profiles; physical activity, diet and medications diaries; a list of self-report questionnaires which can be utilised by practitioners and researchers for tracking user outcomes. It is proposed that the results of this study will inform future developments around this model of service delivery, which has the potential for application to a wide range of health priority areas.