

Attachment Influences within a Gynecologic Cancer Population

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Despite significant levels of distress and demonstrated benefits of psychosocial intervention, few women diagnosed with gynecologic cancers utilize psychosocial resources. Research indicates adult attachment style and perception of social support impact distress. However, relationships between these variables are poorly understood. Participants completed measures of distress, adult attachment style, and perception of social support and provided information regarding self-reported openness to psychosocial services and barriers to using those services. Our analyses identified significant relationships between adult attachment dimensions, distress, perceived social support, and openness to and use of psychosocial services. Distress was significantly associated with openness to and use of psychiatric medication. Perceived social support demonstrated significant mediation effects between attachment anxiety and distress. Similarly, perceived social support demonstrated significant mediation effects in the relationship of elevated depression and high attachment avoidance to use of psychiatric medication. However, significant study limitations may be assumed to have negatively impacted the ability to draw meaningful conclusions from the data. Future research would benefit from further examination of the relationships among adult attachment, distress, perceived social support, and openness to and use of psychosocial services. Clearer understanding the nature of these relationships could guide care providers in being able to more effectively provide services to women who are experiencing significant distress but fail to access services. More effective provision of services and subsequent reduction in distress would likely improve health outcomes.