

Conference Abstract

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Living Beyond Cancer: A Community?Led Intervention for African?Caribbean Cancer Survivors in Manchester

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Background

Disparities in cancer outcomes are often due to cultural barriers, limited support reflective of individual needs, and lower trust in mainstream services. Can?Survive UK (CSUK), a culturally sensitive cancer support charity for African?Caribbean communities co-designed the Cook and Thrive project to address these unmet needs.

Methods

over six months CSUK delivered 12 fortnight cooking sessions, co-designed with service users and facilitated by a certified nutritionist. Participants (n = 17) included individuals affected by cancer, their family members, and carers, recruited via CSUK networks. Quantitative data was gathered using pre- and post-intervention surveys to measure nutritional knowledge, cooking confidence, reduced isolation, access to nutritious meals and overall wellbeing. Given the ordinal nature and small sample size, data collected was analysed using the Wilcoxon signed-rank test and size effects were calculated using rank biserial correlation (r) in Jamovi version 2.6.44. Qualitative feedback was also collected and thematically analysed.

Results

Statistically significant improvements were observed in nutritional knowledge ($w=0.00$, $p=0.002$, $r=-1.000$) and cooking skills ($w=3.00$, $p=0.02$, $r=-0.867$) and overall wellbeing ($w=11.00$, $p=0.021$, $r=-0.718$). Social connection also improved significantly ($w=2.00$, $p=0.015$, $r=-0.911$) showing measurable impact on food-related behaviour. These effect sizes indicate very strong and consistent positive changes across participants. Although improved access to nutritious meals was not statistically significant ($w=36.50$, $p=0.358$, $r=-0.327$). Qualitative themes highlighted strengthened community bonds, reduced isolation, and enhanced empowerment to manage life beyond cancer. Participants particularly valued the cultural resonance, community-focused delivery and familiar foods. The project culminated in a Cook and Thrive Cookbook, co-produced to sustain engagement post-intervention.

Conclusion

This project highlights the importance of integrating culturally competent community approaches within broader cancer support frameworks to reduce disparities and enhance recovery. The Cook and Thrive model demonstrate how holistic, participatory support from a culturally aligned charity such as CSUK can complement clinical survivorship care.

References

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