

Late-Stage Breast Cancer Survivors Diagnosed Through Breast Imaging: A Case Study

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Abstract

This study aimed to explore the experiences of late-stage breast cancer survivors diagnosed through breast imaging, focusing on the factors influencing their decision to undergo imaging, their role in their treatment journey, their survival strategies, and the insights they wished to share. Using a qualitative extrinsic case study approach, the narratives of two female survivors aged 40 and over, residing in Davao City and cancer-free for at least one but no more than ten years, were examined. Data were collected through one-on-one in-depth interviews, both face-to-face and online. Thematic analysis, guided by Braun & Clarke's (2006) framework, revealed fourteen major themes and twenty-one categories encompassing factors such as family support, faith, physician guidance, and personal resilience. The findings underscore the diagnostic value of breast imaging and highlight the importance of psychosocial and spiritual support during survivorship. These insights have important implications for enhancing patient-centered care, promoting early detection, and integrating holistic treatment approaches for advanced breast cancer in clinical practice.

Keywords: *Breast Imaging, Late-Stage Breast Cancer, Survivor Experience, Case Study, Davao City, Radiologic Technology, Qualitative Research.*

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Introduction

Breast cancer is one of the leading causes of cancer morbidity and mortality worldwide, particularly in developing countries. Many patients still present with the disease at late stages, which heavily influences their prognosis and quality of life despite the significant progress in screening technologies and treatment options (Bray et al., 2020). Late-stage breast cancer is often associated with aggressive disease characteristics, greater expense for treatment, and fewer patients achieving overall survival (Bleyer & Welch, 2021). The challenge in the effective utilization of radiological imaging techniques to detect breast cancer early lies in the barriers, such as a lack of access to screening and insufficient awareness about the importance of

early detection (Obeng-Gyasi, 2021; US Preventive Services Task Force, 2024).

Several international studies emphasize the importance of imaging in the diagnosis and management of breast cancer. In Germany, randomized studies have shown how well mammography screening lowers the mortality from breast cancer, with a participation level of 50% in their Mammogram Screening Program, and 83% of women in a survey reported having participated at least once during the past 10 years (Braitmaier, 2022). A study in the Caribbean also demonstrated that yearly mammographic screening significantly reduced late-stage breast cancer incidence and improved survival rates across various populations (International Agency for Cancer Research, 2024). In the United States of America, data show that an intensive program of preventive imaging

would increase rates of early detection, reducing mortality related to breast cancer (Bartsch, 2023).

In the Philippines, similarly, studies have emphasized timely imaging for the diagnosis of breast cancer. A study by Mahilom (2024) showed that even with high awareness levels concerning breast cancer, many women were still hindered from obtaining regular screening services, hence the late-stage diagnosis. Another study showed that the screening rate for breast cancer is alarmingly low, with only 1 % of women undergoing screening resulting in late diagnoses and a significant cancer burden (Ulep, 2023). Further, research has also established that cultural beliefs about illness have delayed treatment-seeking behavior among Filipino women diagnosed with breast cancer (Garcia & Reyes, 2022). The findings, therefore, highlight the need for enhanced radiological practices tailored to the local context to address the issue of late-stage breast cancer diagnoses.

Despite a growing body of literature on breast cancer diagnosis, survivorship, and the psychosocial needs of survivors (Wells et al., 2022; Owoyemi et al., 2025; Carreira et al., 2021), there remains a significant gap in qualitative case studies that specifically explore the lived experiences of late-stage breast cancer survivors diagnosed through breast imaging. Existing studies often emphasize general survivorship outcomes, such as coping with late effects (Rosenberg et al., 2021), managing psychological distress (Bjerkset et al., 2020), or improving quality of life. However, they rarely focus on the pivotal role that imaging plays in initiating the treatment journey for women with advanced diagnoses. A case study by Bleyer and Welch (2021) illustrates the value of exploring individual diagnostic narratives, yet such accounts remain limited. This study addresses that gap by presenting an extrinsic case study of two survivors from Davao City, aiming to understand how breast imaging influenced their decisions, treatment experiences, coping strategies, and the insights they wish to share with others facing similar diagnoses.

Methods

In this research, the researcher employed an extrinsic type of case study to gain a deeper understanding of the overall experience of late-stage

breast cancer survivors diagnosed through breast imaging. An extrinsic case study sheds light on wider phenomena or issues (Ridder, 2017). This design is suitable for this study since it enables in-depth exploration of the survivors' journey, which can inform clinical practice, especially in strengthening early detection strategies. Through this path, the study offers a window into understanding larger phenomena concerning late-stage breast cancer diagnosis, such as the obstacles survivors encounter and the lessons their experiences can teach (Ridder, 2017). The findings are elaborated, interpreted, and reconstructed from the data gathered, without the researcher's views and opinions, and were not altered in any way.

The study was conducted in Davao City, Philippines. The participants of this study were two (2) female late-stage breast cancer survivors diagnosed through breast imaging, aged forty (40) and above, residents of Davao City, who have been declared cancer-free for at least one (1) year but not more than ten (10) years. The study utilized purposive sampling, based on the assumption that, given the aims and objectives of the study, specific kinds of people may hold different and important views about the ideas and issues at question and therefore need to be included in the sample (Mason, 2002).

A case study usually includes a sample of one; however, sampling can also take place inside the case (Schoch, 2020). For this study, the researcher sampled two (2) within one case. Sampling in case study research usually involves the selection of a single case, yet sampling may also take place within the case to study alternative views or subunits (Schoch, 2020). In this study, two survivors of late-stage breast cancer diagnosed via breast imaging were sampled from one case. This was done to allow an in-depth look at their entire experiences and journeys as a whole, ultimately resulting in richer information about the phenomenon being studied. By targeting several participants in a single case, the research was set to catch varied perspectives and themes that form a comprehensive insight into late-stage breast cancer survivors who were diagnosed through breast imaging.

However, the study has some limitations. The two cases limit the generalization of the findings

because their experiences may not represent all breast cancer patients, especially in other socio-economic or cultural contexts.

This study employed one-on-one in-depth interviews, conducted both face-to-face and online, as the primary research instrument. A semi-structured interview guide was carefully designed to extract contextual details from respondents, in tandem with the desired outcomes of the study. Interview questions were constructed flexibly and open-ended, allowing participants to respond in more extended and spontaneous forms that helped explore their feelings and ideas. Additionally, informed consent was carefully sought from participants before the interview, through a process of reading and explaining it to them.

A structured interview schedule was employed to maintain a purposive approach to data gathering. The interviews conducted were taped and transcribed by the researcher, who also made observations on the participants' nonverbal communication, including their facial expressions, hand gestures, and temperament.

Additionally, the interview transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis. This entailed establishing the data's frequency or rate at which patterns occurred and then ensuring they were subjected to critical evaluation to revise them to a point at which they sufficiently reflected what happened with the participants (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The researcher adhered strictly to the provisions of the Data Privacy Act of 2012 in the data collection and analysis process. Confidentiality was protected through anonymous participation, and all personally identifiable information was removed or coded to ensure participant identities were protected. Personal details arising from interviews were never included in the final report or published to the public. All the data collection was done in a secure environment and accessed directly only by the researcher. Following the completion of the study, data gathered from each participant was disposed of in a manner that ensured confidentiality and the privacy of their identity. Audio recordings or transcriptions stored on digital formats were permanently erased from the storage devices, and

physical documents, such as consent forms and notes from interviews, were shredded.

Results and Discussion

This chapter presents the study's results and the interpretation of data obtained from in-depth interviews with two late-stage breast cancer survivors aged forty (40) and above who have been declared cancer-free for at least one year but not more than five years in the City of Davao. The data analysis provides initial insights and patterns, which illustrate the survivors' experiences with radiological imaging along their treatment journeys.

The first case is a 49-year-old female who has been cancer-free for 7 years, while the second case is a 65-year-old female who has been cancer-free for 9 years.

This research utilized a thematic method to interpret and analyze the rich qualitative information gathered from individual in-depth interviews with late-stage breast cancer survivors diagnosed via breast imaging. The analysis entailed extracting important statements from participants, classifying their experiences, and clustering these into thematic groups. By highlighting similarities and differences in their views, the research captured the more profound insights into their experiences, identifying key influential factors, the role of breast imaging, survival strategies, and collective wisdom.

The initial themes, under influential key factors that emerged, are Addressing Health Issues and not undermining health, with subthemes categorized into family, friends, healthcare providers, and financial considerations. The second emergent theme was Overcoming Doubts and Being brave in facing uncertainties, with subthemes categorized into fears, anxieties, and challenges.

The central theme, influenced by breast imaging, in a late-stage breast cancer survivor's journey was "Embracing Clinical Nature," with subcategories including diagnosis and treatment. The next theme was about Knowledge build-up and self-awareness, perception, and enlightenment, with subcategories including the acquisition of clinical facts and understanding one's health status.

The main themes under survival strategies were: recovery through compliance and trust, with subtheme categories like diagnosis, treatment, and recovery. The next theme was strengthening of Faith and commitment to medicine, with subcategories such as approaches and actions and coping mechanisms.

For the collective wisdom and insights, themes such as soul and heart searching, introspection, and willingness were further categorized in reflections, wisdom, and mission. The final theme was about unyielding hope, with subcategories including valuing health and wellness, encouragement, and positivity.

The above themes underscore the complex considerations affecting the participant's decision to undergo breast imaging and add greater depth to her motivations, challenges, and coping mechanisms against second thoughts in confronting essential health issues.

Case A: Key Factors that Influenced the Participant's Decision to Go Through Breast Imaging

Theme 1: Addressing Health Issues

The first theme under Case A's Key Factors that Influenced her decision to undergo breast imaging is addressing health issues, which are categorized into family, friends, healthcare providers, and financial considerations.

Category 1.1: Family

Family is a central influence on the encouragement of health-decision making, especially in the face of lethal disease like advanced-stage breast cancer. For one focus group participant, her very identity as a mother was what drove her and gave her strength. Her unshakeable maternal commitment, parental sense of duty, and selfless perseverance were not simply reactions to a diagnosis—these were acts of love rooted in her will to safeguard and care for her children. Despite the emotional distress, physical discomfort, and financial costs triggered by the imaging procedure

and subsequent therapy, she stood firm. The vision of her children was her inspiration, transforming fear into strength. Her tale illustrates the way that invisible family strings of devotion can push a woman to take care of her health even under the colossus of adversity. This powerful family influence shows the emotional burden of caregiving functions and emphasizes how duty and love are enmeshed to determine ultimate health decisions (Ho et al., 2022).

These key factors from her family were strongly reflected in her statements:

“Pagka-kapa nako, nagpadactor jud ko dayon kay unsaon nalang akong mga anak, gagmay pa raba. Bahala na nang bana basta kay ang mga anak sa jud. Lahi raman jud ug ang mama ang mawala. Kayanon ra nako tanan para sakong mga anak, di ko mag give-up. Kay I want to live for my children.” – Superwoman, Transcript 1, Lines 1-6

At the center of her choice to fight her illness was an unbreakable sense of maternal obligation, an emotion so strong that it overpowered fear. When she found a lump in her breast, her first thought was not for herself, but for her children. The fear of leaving them behind became the motivation that pushed her into action. Driven by responsible parenting and selfless resilience, she saw a doctor immediately and acted on the advice to get breast scans. Her actions were not only an act of response to a medical issue but evidence of how deep a mother's instinct is to care for, protect, and survive for the sake of her children. Her case shows how maternal devotion can be a potent agent of early detection and intervention, bringing worry into action and turning vulnerability into strength.

Category 1.2: Friends

Outside the parameters of family, friendships become a strong impetus in changing a woman's health-seeking behavior, particularly in confronting the unknowns of a breast cancer diagnosis. In the second group, friends, the participant's choice to seek breast imaging was significantly impacted by an immediate circle of trust. Her open report of a lump in her breast to friends and neighbors was not followed by silence or

reserve, but by an open expression of worry, counsel, and practical assistance. This culture of "trust and immediate disclosure" formed the foundation of her courage. The strong urging to get medical care, combined with concrete offers like the availability of mammograms, gave her emotional comfort and practical motivation to take action. Such exchanges illustrate how networks of friends can turn fear into active empowerment, acting as unofficial but powerful adjuncts to the healthcare system. Her experience mirrors Jhumkhawala et al. (2024), who confirm that strong social networks not only improve emotional health but also have a substantial effect on early diagnosis and treatment adherence, highlighting the critical importance of community influence on health choices.

This statement illustrates how interpersonal communication can empower individuals to utilize healthcare services actively:

"Nag share ko sa among mga silingan na mga amiga rasad nako. Gi-encourage ko nila na magpacheck dayon. Naa sad nag ingon na mapa mammogram daw ko. Mao to na encourage rapud ko mapa check sa doctor na dili na maglangay-langay. Supportive rapud sila jud." - Superwoman, Transcript 1, Lines 7-11

The unrelenting support and genuine encouragement from her network of friends turned into an inexorable source of inspiration, urging her to adopt the experience of breast imaging with hope and conviction. Their soothing words of encouragement and mutual understanding provided a reassuring environment in which she no longer stood isolated in confronting the fear or doubt commonly associated with medical interventions. This web of empathy not only calmed her fears but also empowered her, reminding her that making this significant move was a gesture of self-love and empowerment. With their shared warmth and compassion, what was once overwhelming became a promising journey toward health and wellness.

Category 1.3: Healthcare Providers

Healthcare professionals play a pivotal role in a patient's decision-making process, providing not only clinical advice but also reassurance to help

navigate complex health decisions. Under this category, specialist advice and a structured diagnostic pathway were core determinants for the participant's reaction to her breast health issue. Her acceptance of the guideline-recommended order, starting with an ultrasound and progressing to a mammogram, testifies to her faith in medical expertise and respect for systematic direction. The precision and assurance provided by her doctor encouraged her to act promptly, dispelling confusion and affirming the significance of prompt intervention. This case emphasizes the way patient compliance hinges on the robustness of the provider-patient relationship, in which informed advice and transparent communication can tip the balance between reluctance and optimism. As Narcisse et al. (2023) reinforce, healthcare providers' steady and empathic counseling greatly enhances screening protocol adherence and earlier detection, highlighting their unassailable contribution to the chain of breast cancer care.

Her statement demonstrates the participant's swift response to healthcare providers' recommendations:

"Sa breast specialist jud ko nagpacheck human, I was recommended to go through a breast ultrasound first, then, from the findings, I was recommended to undergo a mammogram pud, gifollow rapud nako dayon."— Superwoman, Transcript 1, Lines 12-15

The participant's breast specialist ordered her to undergo a breast ultrasound, followed by a mammogram, which she promptly followed. Following the advice and guidance of her reliable breast specialist, she was encouraged first to have a breast ultrasound, followed by a mammogram, a healthcare process that she undertook without any reservations. Realizing the urgency of taking action, she acted quickly upon the specialist's suggestion, considering every step as an essential part of protecting her well-being. This explicit instruction gave her a sense of direction and comfort, turning what might have been an intimidating process into a deliberate commitment to herself. With every visit, she made progress, reassured by the fact that she was taking control under the watchful eyes of a committed expert.

Category 1.4: Financial Consideration

Financial constraints frequently pose a significant obstacle to early healthcare, but for others, they prove to be an issue that can be overcome with determination and resilience. The subject in this group demonstrated an unshakable resolve to undergo breast imaging despite having no personal income. Her lack of income did not obstruct her choice; instead, it fueled a determined quest for answers. She learned how to bear hospital costs herself while pursuing government financial aid, showcasing independence and resourcefulness. Her case represents a health-concerned determination that values survival above financial struggle. This type of active response is a prime example of how personal agency, coupled with institutional intervention, can heal the gap between diagnosis and access. It corroborates evidence by Benítez et al. (2024), which identifies the ways through which financial constraints may hinder or postpone patients from undergoing required medical tests, thus emphasizing the important role played by support programs in ensuring equal access to healthcare.

The individual's behavior indicates a dedication to her well-being, notwithstanding economic hardships, by making use of existing resources to subsidize the expenses, which is evident in her statements:

“ Wala nako nag isip sa gasto, basta kay macheck rajud ko. Despite not having a job and being a full-time housewife, naningkamot ko na makabayad sa pang ultrasound ug mammogram. Wala jud ko nanampit sakong mga relatives, ako rajud. Nag “LINGAP” sad ko.”— Superwoman, Transcript 1, Lines 16-20

Although she did not earn a regular income working as a dedicated full-time housewife, the respondent showed remarkable resilience and adaptability in seeking means to cover the expenses of her breast imaging examinations. Determined to live independently and with dignity, she refused to burden her family or relatives with money requests. Instead, she boldly sought government assistance programs, such as "LINGAP," to subsidize the cost. Her unshakeable determination to take care of her health, combined with her wise attempts to utilize

accessible resources, demonstrated a depth of strength and independence that quietly enabled her throughout this challenging journey.

Theme 2: Overcoming Doubts

The second theme under case A's key factors that influenced her decision to go through breast imaging is overcoming doubts, which is subdivided into three categories: fears, anxieties, and challenges, highlighting the participant's resilience in the face of a potential cancer diagnosis.

Category 2.1: Fears

Fear, though too often paralyzing, can also be a powerful motivator in the presence of life-threatening disease. In this group, the participant's affective environment was influenced by multiple intertwined fears: fear of leaving her children without a caretaker, fear of having invasive interventions, and fear of receiving a malignant diagnosis. Of these, the most poignant was the fear of leaving her young children behind, a pain that formed an emotional barrier she had to overcome before she could make any medical choice. This fear, though painful, became a spur for action in the end. It highlighted the significance of her role as a mother and motivated her towards taking care of herself in the face of the frightening uncertainties. Her experience is representative of the complex struggle between fear and bravery, wherein parental responsibility eventually prevailed over immobilizing uncertainty. As Johnson & Smith (2021) posit, the threat of having dependents left behind is a potent impetus for health-seeking behavior, especially when early intervention can be the difference between life and death.

Her statement below highlights the strong pull of family obligations on health-seeking decisions:

“ Mahadlok ko mabiyaan akong mga anak mao nagpaultrasound ko dayon para mahibal-an.”
- Superwoman, Transcript 1, Line 21

The intense and loving fear of losing her children behind her resonated deeply within her heart, acting as a strong force that drove her to have breast imaging. This loving maternal fear, based on

love and responsibility, turned her fear into courage, forcing her to confront the medical treatments with resilience. With each step, she was propelled by the prospect of being able to remain by the side of her children, caring for and safeguarding them for years to come. Thus, her fear became not a hindrance but a guiding light, pushing her towards vigilant care and testifying to the resilience of a mother's commitment in the face of uncertainty.

Category 2.2: Anxiety

Anxiety tends to develop in the interstices of uncertainty and choice and causes people to look for clear explanations, reassurance, and mastery. Under this heading, the participant coped with her inner conflict by actually going out of her way to seek second opinions and trying out other remedies while struggling with the affective tug-of-war between denial and obedience. Her behavior demonstrates an intense psychological desire to control the fear of a deteriorating illness by learning more and making deliberate choices. Instead of giving in to anxiety, she turned it into intentional questioning, employing facts as both armor and guidance. This is consistent with the work of Anderson et al. (2023), which identifies that, for many patients, information-seeking and second opinions can be a means of meeting the emotional burden of medical uncertainty. In doing so, the participant was not only coping with her anxiety but regaining a measure of agency, regaining control over a life that suddenly felt fragile and in doubt.

This statement directly illustrates her anxiety:

“Pero hesitant lang ko mag pa biopsy jud, kay baseg masamutan, mao man gud ang mga storya-storya sa uban. Na inig hilabtan mu grabe hinuon. So mao to nag-pa second opinion kos laing ospital, nagpa binisaya sad ko, as third opinion.”— Superwoman, Transcript 1, Lines 29-32

A wave of fear swept through the participant once she was informed that a biopsy was required, as fears took hold that the procedure could only make her condition worse. Fearing this, she sought reassurance by seeking a second opinion at another facility, and even approached the advice of herbal doctors, or "binisaya," to try to find clarity and comfort. Caught

in the fine line between denial and acceptance, she grappled with the option of either following the doctor's orders or considering other alternatives. During this period of uncertainty, her heart and mind were hopelessly entangled in a silent struggle, every move taken with the hope of choosing the option that would best protect her health and gain her peace of mind.

Category 2.3: Challenges

Challenges, internal and external, tend to test the mettle of an individual, particularly when health choices collide with economic hardship and medical ambiguity. The participant exemplified great self-reliance as she dealt with two challenging obstacles: the management of healthcare costs while being out of work and the conflict of opinions about whether or not a biopsy was necessary. Her capacity to bear financial responsibilities without regular income is evidence not just of resilience, but also of initiative in the face of trying conditions. Those challenges, though emotionally and psychologically draining, served only to highlight her unobtrusive determination to do something in the face of adversity rather than discourage her from seeking care. Her account is reminiscent of the research of Zafar et al. (2023), which indicates that economic hardship all but eliminates any sense of patient relaxation and generally results in what is termed "medical treatment delay." In this instance, however, the subject defied that pattern, opting for persistence instead of procrastination. Her account highlights the multifaceted relationships among economic hardship, healthcare decision-making, and the strength required to continue when uncertainty is poised to halt progress.

The challenge regarding finances is reflected by the participants' statements below:

“Naninkamot ko na makabayad sa pang ultrasound ug mammogram. Wala jud ko nanampit sakong mga relatives, ako rajud.”

“As a housewife wala jud koy regular income, although challenge to sya for me, nakaprovide raman pud ko.” - Superwoman, Transcript 1 Lines, 18-19, 22-23

The participant's experience clearly illustrates an extraordinary resilience in the presence of several adversities, displaying strength and willpower despite emotional distress, medical ambiguity, and economic pressures. Wending her way through conflicting views on the necessity of a biopsy, she carefully considered each opinion, demonstrating a thoughtful and brave decision-making process. Despite the economic hurdles that might have otherwise derailed her, she persisted, finding means and avenues to continue caregiving without succumbing to despair. She is a testament to the indomitable human spirit that finds strength in adversity, flexibility in complicated situations, and fortitude in seeking health with unshakeable determination.

Case A: Ways in Which Breast Imaging Helped the Participant's Battle Against Breast Cancer

Theme 3: Embracing The Medical/Clinical Nature

This theme is divided into two (2) categories: diagnosis and treatment. It emphasizes the importance of breast imaging both in diagnosis and treatment. As the key step in the diagnosis of breast cancer, it sparks a sequential line from imaging through biopsy, accurate staging, and diagnostic verification with histopathology. In therapy, imaging-aided choices direct chemotherapy plans, surgical interventions such as mastectomy, and an integrated course combining diagnostics and medical treatment. In this chain, breast imaging provides accurate, timely, and informed management of breast cancer.

Category 3.1: Diagnosis

Diagnosis is the start of a life-changing process, and for most women, breast imaging is the life-sustaining entrance to the journey. The participant's experience in this category underscores the important role imaging took as the first clear-cut step toward learning about her disease. Beyond detection alone, breast imaging initiated a step-wise process, from screening to biopsy, that provided a more definitive clinical picture. It not only establishes the existence of malignancy but also

allows for appropriate staging, which guides the treatment plan. The clarity and specificity of imaging and subsequent biopsy provided a degree of certainty in the face of fear, enabling informed choices to proceed. This is how imaging demonstrates that it is not just a diagnostic procedure, but an active catalyst that converts suspicion into action, fear into knowledge, and uncertainty into direction.

Category 3.2: Treatment

In the continuum of care for breast cancer, breast imaging is not just a diagnostic application but a force that directs treatment decision-making. Imaging was the platform upon which all steps of treatment were constructed for the participant, facilitating individualized care that took into account the nature and scope of the disease. The radiographic clarity afforded by mammography, ultrasound, and MRI enabled physicians to plan chemotherapy regimens based on the results of diagnosis, so that treatment was targeted as well as timely. After biopsy confirmation, surgical treatment through mastectomy became an inevitable option, complemented by the accuracy of the earlier imaging. This smooth continuity from diagnosis to treatment demonstrates the power of an integrated care model, in which therapeutic planning and imaging are synthesized to facilitate both clinical effectiveness and patient care. As Arslan et al. (2024) assert, such systematic evolution, from detection to intervention, demonstrates the pivotal role of breast imaging in providing accurate staging, proper intervention, and integrated management of breast cancer.

The transcripts best explain the theme:

“ Syempre kung wala ko na ato (breast imaging), wala ra nahibal-an ug unsa jud to. Nakatabang sya as first step sa kung unsay next nako buhaton dapat regarding sa bukol.” - Superwoman, Transcript 1, Lines 26-27

To her, breast imaging had been an essential portal; had it not been there, the problematic lump would have gone unseen and untested, and possibly a serious illness would have remained undetected. It was a necessary first step toward a correct and timely diagnosis, clarifying the way forward with precision

and urgency. The nuanced findings and expert suggestions derived from the imaging process led her effortlessly to the next most important phase: validating and correlating those results through histopathology and biopsy. This painstaking sequence ultimately gave way to a personalized treatment plan, carefully crafted in tandem with her diagnosis. Through this sequential process, breast imaging was the foundation of her medical care, converting uncertainty to informed action and hope.

Theme 4: Knowledge Build-up and Self-awareness

Knowledge build-up and self-awareness are divided into two categories: the acquisition of clinical facts and understanding one's health status. Breast imaging plays a vital role in fostering knowledge build-up and self-awareness by offering critical clinical information and enabling individuals to comprehend their health condition. It is the key initial step in diagnosis, leading patients through a systematic process from imaging to biopsy and ensuring appropriate clinical follow-up and management. Aside from its diagnostic importance, breast imaging educates patients to perceive the gravity of additional medical work-up, counterbalance fear with informed decision-making, pursue multiple medical opinions, and value timely intervention. Through this information, patients become more involved in their care process, making them more proactive and confident health decision-makers.

Category 4.1: Acquisition of Clinical Facts

Breast imaging is a double beacon, both a highly accurate diagnostic tool and a massive force of medical awareness, equipping women to understand the seriousness of their health condition and make well-informed, life-sustaining decisions. In the participant's experience, what happens so clearly displays how imaging gave important information about her condition, yielding important insight that set off a series of proper medical actions. Detection of abnormalities by imaging automatically resulted in further evaluation by histopathological biopsy, affirming the diagnosis and directing the

clinical course ahead. This thorough process not only increased her sensitivity to her own body's cues but also mapped out a practical course of follow-up therapy and management. By converting uncertainty into certainty, breast imaging provokes timely medical intervention that directs every subsequent action in treatment. Mirroring the American Cancer Society's (2021) call for the value of early detection and timely treatment, this strategy highlights the fact that every delay in biopsy or treatment potentially puts patients at greater risk of disease advancement. Therefore, breast imaging appears not only as the first step on a patient's trajectory but as an anchor leg of survival, enlightening the way for patients and physicians alike with vital information, pivotal direction, and an imperative summons to action.

The participant's statement supports this:

"Nakabalo ko na need na diay ni ibiopsy kay naa jud possibility na cancer sya." – Superwoman, Transcript 1, Lines 28

After the breast imaging report revealed the results, the suggestion of a biopsy was made with urgency, highlighting the need for prompt action. This timely recommendation mirrored the importance of establishing and understanding the nature of the findings at the earliest opportunity, without delay, to ensure no time was wasted in proceeding toward a definitive diagnosis. The immediate request for a biopsy was a crucial stepping stone between early detection and focused treatment, a turning point in her medical history. Accepting this counsel with determination, she was moved to take the step in the right direction, hoping that early treatment could prove the deciding factor for her road to recovery and well-being.

Category 4.2 Understanding One's Health Status

In times of medical ambiguity, imaging of the breast is an instrumental factor in inducing timely action and directing people through the frequently byzantine process of healthcare obtundation. Within this bracket, the participant's experience informs us about how imaging served to clarify the need for further diagnostic action, inducing her to balance fear with rationality in decisions relative to health. The process of going through imaging made her

more aware of the severity of her condition. It prompted her to seek several opinions as a way of reaffirming her fears and ascertaining the correct path of action. Though second opinions may be empowering and have been found to enhance diagnostic accuracy and outcomes of treatment (Thompson et al., 2021), the participant also faced the possibility of getting misleading or untested advice, the danger of which was delayed intervention. Her tale exemplifies the precarious equilibrium between emotional concern and informed action, reminding us that second opinions are worth only as much as the lesson they teach: namely, to respect evidence-based, timely treatment. From her experience, the value of image-guided medicine as a basis for deliberative yet expedient medical decision-making is irresistibly obvious.

The following statements encapsulated the theme of this category:

“Pero hesitant lang ko mag pa biopsy jud...So mao to nag-pa second opinion kos laing ospital, nagpa binisaya sad ko, as third opinion. Tung kabalo akong doctor sakong gibuhat nakasab.an ko. Ana siya “Mas mulala na nuon ug wala kay buhaton about it”. So mao to nagpa biopsy nako.” – Superwoman, Transcript 1, Lines 29-35

Her reluctance to undergo a biopsy brought a stern admonishment from her doctor, a turning point in her understanding of her health situation. This candid censure made the gravity of her situation and the urgent need for immediate compliance with medical orders especially clear. Through the doctor's firm yet sympathetic words, she came to understand that procrastination or avoidance of the procedure would jeopardize her well-being. It was at this level of confrontation and realization that she made up her mind to set aside her fears and embrace the steps ahead, understanding that her cooperation was important for an accurate diagnosis and effective treatment. This recognition was a reversal from reluctance to responsibility, which ignited her determination to battle her affliction in its most severe form.

Case A: Participants' Strategies to Survive Breast Cancer

Theme 5: Road to recovery through compliance

This theme has three (3) categories: diagnosis, treatment, and recovery. Survivors of breast cancer use multiple strategies to navigate diagnosis, treatment, and recovery, highlighting compliance, resilience, and spirituality. The process starts with the acceptance of the necessity of diagnostic tests and seeking medical information actively. During treatment, patients fight for timely treatment despite complications, balance conformity with domestic responsibilities, and cope with the physical, emotional, and economic costs of therapy. Faith, family support, self-management, and transcending psychological barriers enhance recovery. Furthermore, spiritual beliefs also come into play, with survivors incorporating faith in the healing process, employing emotional release, and gaining support through social networks and spiritual retreats. This multi-dimensional approach develops resilience and tenacity along the cancer path.

Category 5.1: Diagnosis

The process of breast cancer is not merely medical but also very personal, inviting a comprehensive acceptance of the body's requirements and the soul's strength. Here, the experience of the participant showcases a multi-faceted approach characterized by the acceptance of her state, co-operation with required diagnostic tests, and an active pursuit towards comprehending the exigency and importance of early detection. Whereas the psychological burden of a cancer diagnosis is daunting, her commitment to complete compliance with medical advice bespeaks a mindset of courage and clarity. In addition to medical compliance, her psychological health was sustained by having supportive friends and loved ones around, whose moral support became a stabilizing influence. Spiritual activities, like prayer and trips to religious sites, gave her a feeling of calm and inner resilience, augmenting her strength during the process. Even a focus on small lifestyle decisions, such as mindful eating despite treatment-related issues, helped her feel a sense of normalcy and emotional equilibrium. Her experience encapsulates what Ośmiałowska (2021) understands as a holistic model of healing, where medical adherence, social and religious support, and lifestyle adjustment are integrated to

create a more empowered and holistic experience of cancer care.

The following transcripts elaborated on the coping mechanisms during the diagnosis of a Breast Cancer Survivor:

“Pag gawas sa biopsy, nahugno ko. Pero wala ko ni give-up. I told my family about it, and I felt their support. Akong bana bisag di vocal, was there to stay by my side, akong mga pag-umangkon pud were also there for me during those times; ginalaag ko nila para madistract. Naglaag ko sa Cebu unya nag Simala pud to pray.” – Superwoman, Transcript 1, Lines 36-40

When the participant received the biopsy results, she felt intense sadness as if her world had been broken, weighed down by the heavy burden of the diagnosis. Nevertheless, in truth, although receiving crushing news, she would put up a fierce struggle for her life and hope by no means. She courageously shared the weight with her family, borrowing tremendous strength from their unshakeable support. Her husband, quiet spoken though he was, stood firm by her side, a silent source of solace. Her nieces, perceiving her distress, provided company and soft diversions, taking her out to perk her up during those bleak days. Looking for consolation outside the usual, she also traveled to Cebu to pray at the iconic Simala Church, said to be a site of miracles and granted petitions, where she was finally at peace and given renewed hope. With the love of family and the strength of faith, she found resilience amidst desolation and vowed to overcome anything that came her way.

Category 5.2: Treatment

A delicate balancing act between medical necessity and the pressing realities of everyday life often marks the path through breast cancer treatment. In this category, the participant's story reflects a determined effort to advocate for timely treatment despite systemic delays and logistical challenges. Financial constraints, family obligations, and the emotional and physical toll of chemotherapy continually tested her resolve to initiate therapy without unnecessary postponement. However, through each phase, she sought to maintain a sense

of control, juggling treatment schedules with her responsibilities as a caregiver, while also navigating the exhausting side effects that often accompany cancer therapies. A pivotal moment in her journey was overcoming initial resistance to surgery, where medical persuasion helped her reframe fear as a step toward healing. Her experience echoes the findings of Almallah et al. (2024), who emphasize that factors such as financial hardship, limited insurance coverage, and social disparities contribute significantly to delayed treatment, particularly among low-income women. In contrast, the participant's proactive stance and inner resilience allowed her to meet these challenges head-on, demonstrating that successful treatment is not only a clinical endeavor but a testament to the human will to persevere amidst adversity.

The following statements capture the participant's treatment journey:

“Before my treatment, nag panic ko at first kay dugay ang gihatag na schedule sa ako for my first session, mao to nagreklamo ko sa nurse, and thankfully naschedule nako earlier, so after a month lampas gamay na nadiscover nakong bukol, nagsugod nakog chemo. During sa mga chemo nako, kaon jud ko bisang unsa akong gusto except soft drinks. Bahalag way lasa basta kay mukaon jud ko. Hasol sad kayo mag pa chemo kay dili lang raba kana akong buhatunon no? Although wala koy regular job gapangita man gihapon kog way to make money para sakong gastuhunon ato. Mag atiman pakos akong pamilya pud gihapon. Daghan pakog buhaton ba aside ato. Unya sometimes di ko katulog, wa koy energy. Unya nastress ko katong nangalagas nag sugod akong buhok. Murag lisod kaayo sabton akong sarili, ang world, Maka ask ko usahay “Does Jesus care?”. Sa surgery pud dugay ko na-convince before I decided to undergo the operation. Kapoy kaayo, pero padayon lang jud gihapon.” – Superwoman, Transcript 1, - Lines 41-48, 49, 51

Even before treatment had officially started, the participant was seized by anxiety upon being given a chemotherapy timetable, which she felt was impossibly late. Daring not to be ignored in the face of what she perceived as a pivotal setback, she forthrightly expressed her dismay—a courageous move of self-advocacy that resulted in her being

rescheduled for chemotherapy at an earlier time. This was her stand for on-time treatment, a testament to her resolve to battle not just the disease but the inefficiencies that surrounded her. To her, going through chemotherapy sessions was not only physically demanding but logistically challenging, as she found it difficult to balance her medical needs with the ever-present demands of keeping her treatments going and taking care of her family. Her existence transformed into a sensitive balancing act between medical compliance and her socioeconomic and familial obligations. The cost of this fight was inscribed onto her body and spirit—sleepless nights, drained days of energy, and the emotional burden of watching her hair fall out. These alterations left her perplexed, lonely, and sometimes spiritually disturbed, generating raw, soul-bearing questions such as, "Does Jesus care?" But for all her fatigue, she pushed on with a quiet strength, not giving up. Her victory involved overcoming an initial reluctance to have surgery, demonstrating her ability to grow and accept during a time of adversity. Although through pain and fatigue and questioning, she went forward—exhausted, but unyielding, continuing.

Category 5.3: Recovery

In this group, the patient's path is one of a rich tapestry of intertwined coping mechanisms and experiences that reflect the complex nature of recovery from breast cancer. Her narrative brings out the profound significance of spirituality as a source of strength, providing her with not only a sense of direction but also a religious anchor in the tempest of diagnosis and treatment. It was this inner conviction that enabled her to face the uncertainty of her illness and gave her comfort amid physical and emotional pain. Also essential was the steadfast encouragement of family and friends, whose presence sustained her emotional balance, delivered practical support, and instilled her days with strength and resilience. Their friendship served as a lifeline, supporting her through the arduous journey of healing. In addition to this, she showed excellent self-care and personal responsibility, seeking active intervention in her care, asserting the need for timely treatment, and adapting in order to continue her therapies while maintaining care for her family. She also confronted and slowly broke through profound psychological

barriers, striving to re-establish confidence and emotional resilience following the destruction of her diagnosis. Her case demonstrates that recovery from breast cancer is not just a medical challenge, but also an extremely emotional and psychological process. As echoed by Toledo et al. (2021), integration of faith and robust social support networks not only improves quality of life but also psychosocial adaptation of breast cancer survivors. These components combined provide an integrated support system that maintains healing, elevates the spirit, and strengthens the patient to regain life with redoubled courage and clarity.

The following statements capture the participant's recovery journey:

"For my recovery, dako kaayo na help akong family ug friends. Maayo nalang naa sila as my source of strength. Pero, above all, my main source was my faith in God; without it, hagbay rako ni give-up, bisan pag naa ang love and support sakong family ug friends ug wala akong faith wala ko ron." - Superwoman, Transcript1, Lines 52-55

Throughout her recovery process, the participant experienced tremendous strength and solace in the unconditional love and support of her friends and family, whose presence was both emotionally stabilizing and materially assistive in the critical periods of her vulnerability. Nevertheless, most importantly, it was her profound and unwavering faith in God that proved to be her ultimate source of strength. She strongly felt that without this spiritual foundation, she could not have survived the challenges that accompanied her diagnosis and treatment. Her faith acted as a beacon of light in the dark times, providing her not just hope but also the strength to move forward when fear, exhaustion, and doubt sought to overwhelm her. To her, not only was recovery a medical process but also a spiritual one, and it was this unflinching belief in God's presence and purpose that sustained her through the tempest.

Theme 6: Strengthening of one's faith and spiritual beliefs

This theme has two (2) categories: approaches/actions and coping mechanisms.

Embracing one's religious beliefs and faith is crucial in dealing with breast cancer, as it bridges the gap between medical adherence and individual belief systems, incorporating spiritual practices into the recovery process. Patients derive comfort through emotional expression, religious coping, and spiritual retreats, which ease the emotional burden of their condition. Family bonding and social support also enhance resilience and well-being, supporting strength and motivation during treatment and recovery.

Category 6.1: Approaches / Actions

In this category, the experience of the participant illustrates a reflective balance between following medical recommendations and respecting personal preferences, and braiding faith and spiritual practices into her healing journey. Proceeding with recovery from cancer necessitated considering circumspect decisions that were respectful of both her individuality and the recommendations of healthcare workers. She realized that although individual preferences, particularly for food, add ease and normality, following medical advice regarding eating was significant for optimizing her body to heal and react well to treatment. This involved making conscious changes, such as avoiding processed foods and sweet drinks like sodas, in line with cancer-specific nutritional advice. As stressed by the American Cancer Society (2020), such dietary control aids in lowering cancer risk and general well-being. Concurrently, she incorporated religious rituals in her life, deriving emotional and spiritual sustenance to complement her bodily healing. Her path illustrates how recovery is not a narrow formula, but a balancing of medical adherence, individuality, and spiritual strength—a union that promotes not only survival, but overall wellness.

These statements contain the participant's strategy:

"Kaon pud jud, kaon ko bisang unsa akong gusto except soft drinks rajud. Bahalag way panglasa basta mukaon jud ko." – Superwoman, Transcript 1, Lines 58-59

Throughout her course of treatment, the participant preferred to maintain a regular and

comfortable lifestyle by consuming whatever she wanted. However, most foods were tasteless to her recalibrated sense of taste. This action was an expression of her need to hold onto some semblance of control and pleasure in the face of a challenging medical experience. Although she did not adhere to a strict dietary plan, she deliberately avoided soda, knowing its potential for harm in her recovery. This tiny, intentional gesture asserted she knew how to make at least one healthy choice while granting herself flexibility for recovery in a manner that was sustainable and personally soothing. Her case is illustrative of the way eating habits during treatment tend to represent a compromise between medical conservatism and the emotional necessity of familiarity and comfort.

Category 6.2: Coping Mechanism

This category reflects a vibrant fabric of healing strategies based on emotional expression, spiritual surrender, and the warmth of social and familial support. The participant's process illustrates how emotional release—whether through tears, deep conversations, or moments of quiet catharsis—became necessary to relieving the burdens she bore. Together with this emotional release was her immersion in faith-based coping, in which prayer and spiritual retreat provided her with a sanctuary of the sacred amidst the tempest of doubt. In the quietness of these episodes, she gained insight, fortitude, and a tremendous sense of peace that medicine could not avail. Intermingled with the spiritual was the uncompromising care of loved ones, whose presence turned agony into communion and fear into fraternity. The intertwining of faith and fellowship enabled her to reclaim control over her life, enabling her to ride the emotional storm of her diagnosis and treatment. As Vardar et al. (2021) corroborate, religious coping mechanisms are universally accepted by cancer patients as a way to mitigate the fear and depression that so frequently accompany disease. In this beautiful interknitting of spirit, emotion, and communion, the participant's journey is an idealized example of a healing process that reaches beyond the physical and sustains the soul.

The following statements elaborate on the participant's coping mechanisms:

Prayers and letting myself feel all the emotions, I realized that I need to take care of myself. Tapos and support pud from co-cancer patients. We realized during our journey that the support must come from within us, from our community of women who have Breast Cancer. We help each other, we lean on each other, and we pray for each other.” – Superwoman, Transcript 1, Lines 60-64

The participant's coping process was rooted deeply in prayer, genuine emotional letting go, and the reassuring fellowship of other cancer warriors. When the burden of her illness became overwhelming, she prayed—not as a habit, but as a lifeline, a holy dialogue with the Divine where she spoke of her fears, hopes, and desire for strength. She permitted herself to cry openly, accepting every tear as an essential release that tempered the weight of her feelings. Anything but a weakness, these tears became a purging energy, serving to help her work through the hurt she could not articulate. So was the benefit of the presence of her fellow cancer patients, whose mutual experiences served to create an unspoken sense of common ground and mutual support. In her business, she discovered reassurance, encouragement, and the reassuring reminder that she was not alone in her battle. All these coping strategies created a soothing yet strong web of emotional strength that sustained her through even the most challenging days of healing.

Case A: Insights that the Participants Can Share with Other Women Diagnosed with Late-stage Breast Cancer

Theme 7: Soul and Heart Searching Amidst Scientific Approach.

This theme has three (3) categories: reflections, wisdom, and mission. The respondent shared how her journey with late-stage breast cancer has deepened her faith, resilience, and sense of purpose. She finds strength in recognizing a higher power, embracing faith as a lifelong anchor, and viewing her struggles as a path to personal growth. She has learned to navigate suffering through humility, gratitude, and surrender while staying

committed to her family and inspiring others. Her mission extends beyond her survival—she offers support, serves as an advocate, and turns her hardships into a way to uplift fellow patients. Holding on to unyielding hope, she has developed a deep appreciation for health and wellness, prioritizing self-care and accepting physical changes while affirming that true completeness is not just about the body. By choosing courage over fear and placing her trust in divine providence, she remains steadfast, finding strength in faith and the stories of others who have overcome similar battles.

Category 7.1: Reflections

Reflection throughout the journey with cancer displays an inner change fundamental to faith, family devotion, and an unbreakable determination to survive. In this participant, acknowledging a higher power was not only a belief but a core reality that grounded her throughout the turmoil of disease. Faith was not a transient solace. It was a life practice, a beacon that shone on even the deepest recesses of her travail. Her purpose centered on her place within the family; she did not view life as hers alone to bear, but as a holy obligation to carry on the ties that bound her closest. This sense of responsibility turned into both her compass and her strength, motivating her to get up each morning with grit even when the road was filled with uncertainty and exhaustion. She came to know perseverance as a kind of courage, and every breath, every relationship, as a gift that required tending. In periods of silence and spiritual connection, she discovered meaning and emotional sanctuary. As Hindmarch et al. (2021) attest, the incorporation of spirituality within cancer care can play a substantial role in maintaining emotional well-being and reducing distress. Spiritualities such as prayer and belief in divine presence reassure and guide, while profound relationships and long-term resilience continue to uphold patients through treatment. Overall, her musings reflect the reality that healing is not just a bodily process but a spiritual and interpersonal one, a resurrection of the soul as well as the body.

This transcript expresses the participant's reflection on her journey:

"There is a God. Never forget to pray and trust God always. Just keep going because your loved ones still need you." – Superwoman, Transcript 1, Lines 65-67

Her words reverberate as a soft hymn of hope and courage: "There is a God. Never forget to pray and trust God always. Just keep going because your loved ones still need you." In these few but compelling words, the participant divulges the holy string that kept her from coming apart at the seams during every tempest, the unshakeable conviction in a divine being. Prayer, to her, was more than a routine but a lifeline, a spiritual communion that revived her courage when fear knocked, and light failed. God became her shield, her haven, and her guide. Her determination to "just keep going" was not the result of blind grit, but of profound, intentional love for the people who were standing with her and relying on her courage. Each gasp, each fight, each step taken was a testimony to the flame that burned inside of her: a mother's love, a woman's spirit, and a believer's heart. Her words, gentle but powerful, are more than just a word of encouragement; they are a benediction of hope, encouraging others to lean on faith, to cling to prayer, and to rise with quiet strength for the sake of those who hold them close.

Category 7.2: Wisdom

Adversity is a powerful catalyst for personal and spiritual transformation. When human beings face life-changing struggles, such as a cancer diagnosis, they find themselves on a path of profound awakening and expanded faith. In the depths of their most intimate vulnerability, humility is a sacred gift, and letting go is not defeat but a heroic step of faith in something greater than self. The willingness to release control and entrust one's path to the divine allows for serenity amidst chaos, fostering resilience that is both gentle and unwavering. Gratitude and mindfulness, nurtured even in the darkest hours, bloom like wildflowers through the cracks of suffering, offering a renewed perspective on life's fleeting yet precious moments. Most people find that by looking to their religious

and spiritual beliefs, they are surrounded by a sense of comforting meaning and divine purpose beyond the pain. Research has indicated that the majority of cancer patients seek out spiritual or religious beliefs in order to cope with cancer, finding comfort and meaning in faith (Huda et al., 2022).

The following statements show the participant's wisdom during her trials:

"This experience will make or break you. All you have to do is give up your pride and self-sufficient thinking. Surrender everything to God, because sometimes He allows things like this to happen, for He wants us to be closer to Him. During the trials and tribulations, you will learn how to be more mindful of what God has given, and somehow this will help you to see your purpose." – Superwoman, Transcript 1, Lines 68-72

These are poignant words of profound spiritual insight, reflecting a soul that has grappled with adversity and emerged in grace and insight. The participant recounts her experience not as a curse, but as a crucible—a divine proving ground where pride is stripped and the illusion of autonomy is destroyed. In the nakedness of her vulnerability, she was drawn not to despair, but to an invitation to come closer to God. Her call to surrender is not an act of defeat, but an act of holy bravery, dumping one's burdens, ego, and control in the lap of the Divine. She is convinced that these trials are not arbitrary; instead, they are loving invitations from Heaven, beckoning us back to our spiritual center. With pain and doubt, she grew closer to the blessings she had previously taken for granted, learning to embrace the small gifts and silent miracles of everyday life. In this divinely guided journey of letting go and waking up, she started to catch a glimpse of her higher calling, not just to survive, but to thrive, to serve, and to live with purpose that is grounded in divine connection. Her words are not only a reflection. Instead, they are a spiritual map for others traversing blackness, pointing out that surrender is the entrance to transformation and purpose.

Category 7.3: Mission

Battling cancer tends to move people to turn their hardship into a worthwhile quest to inspire

others. Out of the darkness of sickness, many breast cancer survivors find a new purpose in life, one that is anchored by love, compassion, and service. For some, this starts with a strong commitment to familial obligations, valuing the role they have in caring for and guarding those nearest and dearest to their hearts. Others stretch out their hands and hearts beyond their doors, becoming centers of hope for other patients traversing the stormy waters of diagnosis and treatment. In their defiant voices and caring actions, they are not only advocates but living proof of resilience, strength, and community power. Their assistance is not just verbal; it is emotional support and actual help, usually shedding light for others to proceed. Indeed, Moon (2021) has shown in a study that breast cancer survivors can play a significant role in empowering cancer patients to seek the necessary information and emotional assistance, which reflects the significant impacts of survivorship programs on the health of cancer-stricken persons. In this great undertaking, survivors are greater than winners; they are beacons of light, of meaning, and of healing for everyone who travels the same journey.

This mission is evident in the participant's statements:

“During our journey as breast cancer survivors, we have realized that we can also be an instrument to help those who are going through the same thing we went through. We can provide support and encouragement to them.”- Superwoman, Transcript 1, Lines 73-75

These are the moving words that indicate a lovely change out of suffering, a transformation from breast cancer to service, from survival to sisterhood. By walking through the flames of breast cancer, the participant found not only her inner strength but a greater call: to become a light of hope to others still in the storm. What was once a lonely battle is now a common cause, a calling to inspire, to comfort, and to walk hand in hand with those who are starting to fight. Her own journey, with all its tears, victories, and unheard prayers, has molded her into a cauldron of empathy, someone who provides not only words but living empathy, not just counsel but a living example of perseverance and faith. For her, survival is not just about beating the disease; it is about reaching back and illuminating the way for others,

letting them know healing exists, and that they do not have to go through the darkness alone. In opting to turn her scars into pillars of strength for other people, she exemplifies the ultimate manifestation of resilience, one grounded in love, community, and the dignity of shared humanity.

Theme 8: Unyielding Hope

The theme has two (2) categories: valuing health and wellness, and encouragement and positivity. The patient's journey is one of unshakeable hope, one that focuses on the close interrelationship between body and soul. In hardship, she has come to better appreciate health, knowing that the most minute components of wellness are worthy of their place. Having accepted physical alteration, like a mastectomy, she has been strengthened in her conviction that wholeness is not merely measured by body shape but by courage and inner fortitude. She values self-care and gratitude, taking cues from other survivors and opting for courage rather than fear. Her unshakeable belief in the sovereignty of God, His mercy, and His love enables her to redirect attention from individual trials to a higher level of confidence in divine providence, making her outlook in life more optimistic.

Category 8.1: Valuing Health and Wellness

Tribulations makes one cherish health and well-being, putting into perspective the dynamic interrelationship between physical and emotional health. For most survivors of breast cancer, healing starts with a deepened awareness—a recognition that health is not only the lack of disease but also an exquisite balance of body, mind, and spirit. With the agonizing experience of treatment and healing, even the smallest doses of resilience and vigor are precious, no longer assumed but preserved in gratitude. The process of undergoing mastectomy, for example, tends to stir deep upsets of feelings of loss and assault on the sense of wholeness. This is not just a physical change but an emotional accounting that can profoundly influence one's self-concept and self-confidence. But within this fragility is a silent strength: the potential to reinterpret beauty and integrity outside the confines of bodily

appearance. By accepting these alterations with self-compassion and conscious self-care, survivors develop a well-being based on acceptance and inner peace. Studies have indicated that dissatisfaction with body image not only causes psychological distress but also affects patients' coping with medical challenges (Yao et al., 2024). In this way, health priority in the form of mindful living and thankfulness is an act of healing and empowerment, a recovery of self amidst loss.

This transcript sums up the participant's way of valuing her health after her journey:

“Murag naay kulang sa akua pirmi. Aside from having my right breast removed, naa juy feeling na naa nay kulang sa akua. Na realize nako na every part satong lawas satong pagkatao is important and should be valued, no matter how small it is. Every part of us has its significance that should not be taken for granted.” – Supwerwoman- Transcript 1, Lines 76-80

The participant testified to a persistent feeling of absence, something missing not just in a physical way but in the inner recesses of her soul. This absence, both literal and metaphorical, was an unobtrusive reminder of what was lost and, at the same time, of what still existed. Through her experience, she arrived at a profound insight: that every aspect of the human body, however seemingly insignificant, is meaningful and valuable. She started to appreciate the complicated pattern of her existence, realizing that every fragment makes up the wholeness of life. With this new consciousness, she met life with more appreciation, appreciating health and well-being not as foregivens but as delicate riches to be cherished. The most mundane moments, the tiniest pleasures, and the once-neglected blessings took on new meaning. In her contemplations, there flourished a humble reverence for her body, for existence itself, and the holy gift of ongoing life.

Category 8.2: Encouragement and Positivity

Faith and community-based encouragement and optimism strengthen the person to deal with breast cancer resiliently and hopefully. Drawing support from fellow survivors' victories, patients

have a reservoir of courage that conquers fear and despair, pushing them forward in the face of darkness. This common victory acts as a shining light, guiding them through the darkness and assuring them that they are not alone. Beyond individual challenges, most people find comfort in diverting their attention towards the sovereignty, grace, and unlimited love of God. This divine hug soothes the troubled heart and fosters unflinching trust in providence. Berniece's account as a breast cancer survivor aptly illustrates such a profound interplay of faith, prayer, and unyielding family support as pillars of resilience in overcoming adversity (National Breast Cancer Foundation, 2023). These accounts create a tapestry of hope and empowerment, showing how the peaceful intermix of spirituality and positive thinking can lead to profound solace, validating that even amid pain, the guiding hand of some higher power provides light, love, and unbreakable strength.

The relevance of such stories is captured in the statements below:

“Laban lang gyud! Kung nakaya nako, makaya rapud nimo”. There is a God. He will carry you through. Never let fear overcome you. Face it with courage and faith. This fight is not about you anymore; it is all about God and His goodness, faithfulness, sovereignty, mercy, and strength. He knows everything and loves you more than anyone. God will never fail you.” – Superwoman, Transcript 1, Lines 81-85

These words sound out like a clarion call of hope and unshakeable resilience, a loving summons to join the fight with unwavering spirit. Behind this battle cry is a profound truth: there is a God, an omnipresent, loving shelter, who bears us gently through darkest valleys and most savage storms. Fear, though it may hover like a shadow, must never be permitted to win the day. Instead, it is to be faced squarely, with unflinching courage and a belief that takes hold deep in the heart. This battle goes beyond the individual; it becomes a holy testament to the infinite goodness, faithfulness, and sovereignty of God. His mercy overflows like an endless river, His strength an impregnable fortress, holding us when we falter and raising us when we fall. He knows all hidden pain, every unshed tear, and His love is more than we can comprehend, greater than any love of

man, more profound than the deepest sea. In this godly hug, we are sure that God will never forsake us, never leave us, and never stop walking beside us. So, be encouraged and push ahead; this battle is not yours, but a mighty journey woven with the beauty and majesty of a God who is eternally faithful.

Case B: Key Factors that Influenced the Participant's Decision to Go Through Breast Imaging

Theme 9. Not Undermining the Possible Impact of Health Conditions

This theme is divided into categories: family, friends, healthcare provider, and financial considerations. Regarding family, the key factors are the partner's emotional and practical support, collaborative discussions with her husband, reduced isolation through familial involvement, and the husband's calm demeanor and shared optimism, which may have helped her undergo breast imaging. Regarding friends, the factors that affected her decision-making were that friends were excluded from discussions about the lump and the imaging process until the results were confirmed. The decision to share the news with friends occurred only after receiving definitive results. Concerning healthcare providers, the following are considered: specialist consultation to understand her health status, a guided diagnostic protocol, and the necessity of a breast ultrasound. With regards to financial consideration, the following factors are considered: finding ways to manage hospital expenses independently, health-driven determination, and personal financial adjustment.

Category 9.1: Family

The encouragement and active participation of a husband are important considerations in a marriage when a woman is considering breast imaging. In the intimate moments of doubt and vulnerability, the stabilizing influence of a husband, providing both emotional support and wise direction, can transform an intimidating encounter into an experience of mutual courage and confidence. His direct involvement during consultations for medical checkups and considerate dialogue build a reassuring alliance that removes feelings of loneliness,

facilitating more open and confident decision-making. By doing so, it not only eliminates anxiety but also empowers the woman to be proactive in protecting her health. Studies highlight the significant influence of spouse support in encouraging women to join breast cancer screening programs since partners tend to decode overwhelming information and calm remaining apprehensions. Research conducted by Kamila (2025) points out that husbands' knowledge and participation have a significant impact on wives' health-seeking behavior, stressing the essential role of family participation in health choices and the caring potential of love and solidarity in the presence of medical complications.

The following statements show how her husband supported her to undergo breast imaging:

"Only my husband knew about it because he was there with me during my check-up. He was okay with it at first because we never thought that it would be that serious, since I never felt any symptoms aside from the tiny lump." – Wonder Woman, Transcript 2, Lines 89-91

In the peaceful haven of that moment, only her husband was her confidant—a steady presence at her side in the dark hours of her check-up. Their communal silence was complete with tentative hope, woven from the soft promise that the surprising news could be nothing more than a minor ripple in the peaceful ocean of wellness. The small lump, quiet and nearly imperceptible, spoke no threatening secrets to her body, and so both remained ignorant of the weight that stealthily waited. His serene acceptance initially was a gentle barrier against fear, a mutual certainty that this shadow across her breast would not cloud their existence. There in that close space between them, trust and love danced with cautious optimism, protecting her heart against the burden of impending unknown battles.

Category 9.2: Friends

Most people are reluctant to discuss health issues with their friends until they have received a confirmed diagnosis. This is because of the conflicting uncertainties and emotional distress that come with indefinite health data. The participant's

initial reluctance to discuss her breast lump and imaging procedure is an instinctive human tendency to guard oneself against hasty conclusions, misinterpretation, or unwanted advice. It was not until getting conclusive results that she was prepared to share her circle with trusted friends, opting to get support from a position of truth and not fear. This hesitation is not unusual; a study by Agyemang et al. (2023) finds that distress caused by fear, cultural beliefs, and anxiety regarding unsolicited advice tends to deter patients from reporting initial health issues. This balance between disclosure and privacy highlights the intricate emotional terrain traversed by individuals facing the unknown.

This is supported by the participant's statement below:

"My friends did not know about it until after the breast imaging results came." – Wonder Woman, Transcript 2, Line 92

The secret was kept closely, hidden away like a delicate flower waiting for spring to bloom. Her friends were none the wiser, strolling alongside her in mundane moments, oblivious to the quiet tempest brewing inside. It was not until the results of the breast imaging appeared, exposing secrets hidden below the surface, that the curtain was quietly drawn aside. In that moment, the weight of silence she had carried by herself was distributed, turning aloneness into a circle of support and mutual understanding. The disclosure was a watershed, a time when shadows yielded to encounter, and the potential of friendship began to break out in the light of honesty.

Category 9.3: Healthcare Provider

Healthcare provider consultation remains central to walking patients through the diagnostic process. The participant's referral for a breast ultrasound, carefully suggested by her obstetrician-gynecologist, illustrates the quintessential role that informed and empathetic healthcare providers play in dispelling the mystique of sophisticated medical procedures. Provided with clear direction and reassurance, these professionals serve as pillars of trust, reassuring patients to navigate uncertainty with confidence and clarity. Their proficiency not only ensures timely and precise diagnosis but also

promotes compliance with screening protocols, which is crucial in identifying diseases early when treatment can be most impactful. As Narcisse et al. (2023) reinforce, explicit and consistent recommendations by healthcare workers immensely support patient compliance with screening guidelines and aid early detection of breast cancer. This important alliance between patient and provider is the foundation of quality healthcare provision and better outcomes.

Her compliance to undergo breast imaging because of her doctor's referral is evident in her statement:

"My Ob-Gyne was the one who advised me to undergo a breast ultrasound, so I did it." – Wonder Woman, Transcript 2, Line 93

Her OB-GYN was the beacon in the dark, providing soft yet firm words of encouragement to undergo a breast ultrasound. With faith in her doctor's judgment and concern, the participant accepted this pivotal step willingly. As a compass guiding through troubled seas, the doctor's guidance shone the way into understanding, encouraging her forward with gentle confidence. There, in that instant, she let go of the process, realizing that this small act of trust could unveil secrets behind the veil and take her closer to the answers and the healing she had been searching for.

Category 9.4: Financial Consideration

Financial limitations tend to push individuals to depend on their own money to receive necessary healthcare services. Under budgetary constraints, the participant's choice to pay out of her pocket for breast imaging reflects a common dilemma many patients face: adapting to the exorbitant amounts of money involved in necessary medical intervention. Such an expense can pose high barriers, resulting in tough decisions and, in some cases, delaying or abstaining from preventive interventions altogether. The burden of these out-of-pocket costs not only affects short-term financial stability but also affects longer-term health outcomes by deterring timely screenings and early interventions. Benitez et al. (2024) research explains in precise detail that such financial barriers can discourage many from seeking preventive care, such as cancer screening, emphasizing the high priority

for more accessible and less expensive healthcare options to ensure no one's health is jeopardized by economic struggle.

The statement supports this:

"I took it from my budget" – Wonder Woman, Transcript 2, Line 94

She wisely drew from her funds, a reflection of her unobtrusive strength and resourcefulness. With unwavering determination, she took on the financial burden herself, overcoming the hardships without putting others out. This demonstration of self-reliance revealed so much about her resilience, synthesizing the needs of treatment and everyday life in elegance and unshakeable devotion. With every peso she spent, there was a tale of bravery and an unspoken promise to do whatever it took to continue on her path to recovery.

Theme 10. Being Brave to Face Uncertainties

This theme is categorized into fear, anxiety, and challenges. Fear with key factors- without fear or worry to get this over with, concerns and fears emerged only after receiving the imaging results, and anxiety intensified when the breast imaging results yielded the need for a core needle biopsy. With regards to anxieties, the following factors are considered: the individual experienced anxiety following the biopsy procedure and results, and she was skeptical about the difference between the ultrasound results and histopathology. Furthermore, with regards to challenges, the following factors are being considered by the respondents: conflicting opinions on biopsy vs breast imaging, maintaining emotional resilience, understanding and interpreting complex medical information, such as imaging results and surgical findings, and challenges in her trust in medical technology and procedures.

Category 10.1: Fear

Early fortitude in confronting breast imaging generally leads to fear and uncertainty in hearing inconclusive results. The participant had approached

the process with a resolute heart and firm resolve, willing to finish the process and be clear. However, as soon as the results were out, particularly with the suggestion for a core needle biopsy, a veil of fear and doubt fell. What had been tranquil preparedness became an anxiety storm, as the unseen ramifications of the diagnosis awakened inner emotional chaos. This shift from courage to vulnerability is a sorrowful reminder of the intricate psychological odyssey that precedes medical testing, where fear and hope frequently swirl in anguished synchrony.

Category 10.2: Anxiety

Anxiety and skepticism escalate when controversial medical results shake confidence in diagnostic tests. The informant was left struggling with disconcerting inconsistencies between ultrasound reports and histopathology slides, whose shadow of uncertainty hovered over the reliability of her imaging tests. Such medical uncertainty was heightened by the difficulty of having to deal with conflicting expert views and interpreting obscure medical technicalities. This testing endeavor pushed her emotional endurance to breaking point. The tenuous faith that she once had in medical technology and procedures started to crumble, laying layers of confusion and distress on an already challenging ride. Moments of doubt such as these not only muddy the road to diagnosis and treatment but also highlight the deeply human effort to discern clarity and hope in the face of medical ambiguity.

Category 10.3: Challenges

Whereas the participant had no trouble with breast imaging per se, she did find challenges in processing medical decisions and emotional resilience. The test came later, however, when she encountered differing viewpoints regarding whether or not to pursue a biopsy versus imaging alone, which produced uncertainty and internal conflict. Dealing with sophisticated medical data, from reading imaging reports to comprehending surgery results, was too much, requiring a level of understanding that seemed beyond the grasp of most patients. Among such intellectual struggles, staying emotionally resilient became equally challenging, as skepticism regarding the accuracy of medical equipment and methods crept in, eroding her

confidence. A study by Bick et al. (2020) highlights this emotional pathway, demonstrating that although anxiety can be low prior to first imaging, it tends to increase intensely following the revelation of suspicious findings, a time of intensified distress and vulnerability for patients.

Her fears, anxiety, and the challenges are summed up in the transcripts below:

“ There were no concerns or fears regarding my decision to undergo breast imaging. My fears and concerns only started after the results were released and during and after core needle biopsy.” – Wonder Woman, Transcript 2, Lines 95-97

In the beginning, she had no fear or uncertainty regarding her choice to have breast imaging; her heart was firm, and her mind was clear as she accepted the way forward. It was not until the results were revealed, throwing shadows of doubt, that the seeds of fear and doubt started to germinate in her. Those fears intensified further through and after the core needle biopsy, as the weight of her ordeal came down hard on her soul. At those times of vulnerability, the previously placid waters were roiled with waves of fear and doubt, exposing the real emotional depth of her valiant struggle.

Case B: Ways in Which Breast Imaging Helped the Participant’s Battle Against Breast Cancer

Theme 11: Embracing the Medical/Clinical Nature

This theme was divided into two (2) categories: diagnosis and treatment. Under diagnosis, the breast imaging impacts include recognizing the medical condition that requires a diagnostic procedure, accurately localizing breast lumps through imaging, and sequential progression from imaging to biopsy. Under treatment, the impacts were: imaging-driven decision-making for treatment planning, chemotherapy sessions tailored to diagnostic findings, surgical intervention (mastectomy following diagnostic confirmation), and integrated care combining diagnostics and treatment.

Category 11.1: Diagnosis

The patient's experience highlights the critical importance of breast imaging in ensuring an accurate diagnosis of breast cancer. Through the use of this sophisticated diagnostic aid, early detection of subtle alterations in the breast tissue is possible, leading to timely and well-informed medical intervention. At the center of this process is the BI-RADS system, a standardized reporting system that enhances diagnostic precision by classifying findings into subgroups—4A, 4B, and 4C—each designating an increasingly higher probability of malignancy. These categories align with probabilities ranging from slightly more than 2% to very close to 95%, enabling clinicians to individualize follow-up investigations and interventions with specificity and confidence (Radswiki, 2025). These formalized strategies not only maximize the efficiency of breast cancer detection but also provide patients with greater clarity regarding their diagnosis, promoting trust and diminishing uncertainty at a time of adversity.

The following transcripts underscore the participant’s experience:

“My first breast imaging results impression falls under BIRADS 4. Suspicious abnormality, low to moderate probability of cancer. Biopsy should be considered.” – Wonder Woman, Transcript 2, Lines 103-104

The initial breast image results came with a heavy burden—a BIRADS 4 impression, the indication of a suspicious abnormality that had a low to moderate chance of cancer. This inconclusive judgment hung like a shadow in her heart, a precarious dance between hope and dread. The suggestion for a biopsy hung as the next step, a portal to truth through the cloud of doubt. At that point, the silent tension of possibility and danger came together, introducing a journey of a higher order toward clarity and healing.

Category 11.2: Treatment

Breast imaging plays a pivotal role in the comprehensive management of breast cancer by precisely establishing tumor size and location. This accuracy is invaluable, forming the cornerstone of creating a best-case and patient-specific treatment

plan based on the specific characteristics of each patient's condition. By meticulous visualization, clinicians obtain vital information that informs surgical interventions, radiation therapy, and other treatments to ensure the malignancy is treated effectively while conserving as much healthy tissue as possible. Such careful mapping of the tumor size and position not only optimizes therapeutic outcomes but also gives assurance to both patients and healthcare professionals throughout the complex journey of cancer treatment. As Sogunro (2021) stresses, precise identification of tumor borders and location through breast imaging is the foundation of successful treatment planning, with the role of the technology being imperative in contemporary oncology.

The statement below supports the participant's understanding of how breast imaging impacted her treatment:

"It (breast imaging) is of great help because the actual size and position of the lump was identified through it." – Wonder Woman, Transcript 2, Line 108

The breast imaging was a valuable guide on her journey, providing clarity in the fog of uncertainty. With its sharp and revealing eye, the real size and precise location of the evasive lump were laid bare, converting fuzzy fear into concrete knowledge. This essential knowledge became a ray of hope, illuminating the road forward with understanding and direction. Under the soft light of the imaging, she discovered a sense of reassurance, a first step toward facing her illness with confidence and determination.

Theme 12: Perception and Enlightenment of Health Issues

This theme is divided into two (2) categories: the acquisition of clinical facts and understanding one's health status. The impacts of breast imaging under the first category are as follows: the critical role of early diagnostic procedures, diagnostic confirmation through histopathology, breast imaging as the critical first step in diagnosis, and clinical follow-up and patient management. Breast imaging aids in understanding

one's health status by determining the actual size and location of the lump, informing decision-making in health choices.

Category 12.1: Understanding Acquisition of Clinical Facts

Breast imaging forms the foundation for early diagnosis and successful treatment of breast cancer. As the pivotal initial step in the diagnostic process, it enables accurate localization and nuanced characterization of breast lesions, illuminating lesions that may otherwise remain undetected. This critical imaging step is smoothly succeeded by histopathological correlation with biopsy, yielding absolute information that dictates the line of treatment. This highly choreographed progression, from imaging to biopsy to clinical care, acts as the foundation for integrated patient care, so that interventions are timely, targeted, and appropriate. As the Mayo Clinic (2025) explains, screening mammograms hold a crucial position in this process and are used routinely to identify breast cancer early. If a screening mammogram shows suspicious results, further imaging and biopsies are used to make the diagnosis and design a customized treatment plan, a systematic and life-preserving strategy for breast cancer treatment.

The process and how breast imaging impacted the participant are evident in her statements:

" My first breast imaging results impression falls under BIRADS 4. Suspicious abnormality, low to moderate probability of cancer. Biopsy should be considered. I was not so worried at first. My Ob-Gyne no longer suggested a mammogram." – Wonder Woman, Transcript 2, Lines 103-106

Her first breast imaging report came with a BIRADS 4 impression, a suspicion of an abnormality, with low to moderate likelihood of cancer. Although this news had an unpleasant air of uncertainty, she was not initially overwhelmed by worry, hanging on to a tenuous sense of calm instead. Her Ob-Gyne, reassured by the result, no longer advised her on a mammogram, providing a temporary respite amid the storm. This delicate equilibrium of restraint and reassurance was a

turning point in her journey, where doubt hung on, but hope quietly persisted.

Category 12.2: Understanding One's Health Status

Breast imaging is a central tool in early breast cancer detection and treatment by properly evaluating tumor location and size to inform key treatment decisions. Methods like mammography, ultrasound, and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) are the staples of diagnosis, staging, and follow-up, establishing crucial information that drives every aspect of patient management. These imaging modalities not only expose the secret details of tumors but also help clinicians design accurate treatment regimens and track therapeutic responses. No less significant is patient compliance with clinical recommendations, particularly the completion of biopsies, which are critical to verifying diagnoses and activating effective interventions. A systematic review and meta-analysis spanning EU member states by Ricci-Cabello et al. (2020) highlights the fact that adherence to guidelines for breast cancer dramatically increases survival rates. True to this fact, the participant welcomed the biopsy process with optimistic resolve, acknowledging it as a vital step toward unraveling her condition and bettering her survival chances.

The participant's statement supports this:

"I felt so grateful to God that He blessed me with wisdom and obedience to follow the oncology surgeon's advice to get a biopsy." – Wonder Woman, Transcript, 2, Lines 110-111

She was filled with immense gratitude towards God, who had bestowed upon her the wisdom and inner strength to listen to the oncology surgeon's advice without question. This act of God's blessing in giving her the gift of discernment and obedience was a beacon of light in her life, lighting the way through fear and uncertainty. In her own heart, she knew it was by the grace of God that she had the strength to make this defining move, a testament to hope and faith that guided her toward healing and understanding.

Case B: Participants' Strategies to Survive Breast Cancer

Theme 13: Compliance and Trust in Medical Care.

This theme encompasses three categories: diagnosis, treatment, and recovery.

Category 13.1: Diagnosis

Successful breast cancer diagnosis is influenced by acceptance of the disease, medical compliance, support system use, and emotional hardness. The participant's readiness to face her reality upon finding a lump and her aggressive decision to seek medical examination are demonstrations of a strong and prudent response to a potentially life-changing diagnosis. Her collaboration with diagnostic tests, like the biopsy, and her dependence on emotional and practical support from the people around her, are indicative of the many-sided resilience it takes to confront such a challenging experience. Early detection, combined with early consultation and complete adherence to medical recommendations, dramatically enhances the prospects of successful treatment and recovery. A study by Perez-Bustos (2021) points to the crucial role of patient navigation services, which offer not only emotional support but also practical assistance, ultimately improving compliance with diagnostic and treatment procedures and resulting in improved patient outcomes.

The following transcripts demonstrate the patient's strategy/ experience, which is mainly compliance with guidance on her diagnostic journey:

"It all started when I felt a peanut-sized lump on my breast in November 2015, and I decided to have it checked by my OB-Gyne after a month or two. My Ob-Gyne advised me to undergo a breast Ultrasound. I went for a biopsy with the encouragement and support of my then school principal. Biopsy results revealed Invasive Ductal Carcinoma Stage 3C, HER2." – Wonder Woman, Transcript 2, Lines 130-135

Her discovery was low-key, literally passed by without anyone noticing, during November 2015, when she found a tiny peanut-sized tumor burrowed in her breast. This quiet signal would eventually

decipher a life-changing revelation. She waited for a month or two before finally getting her OB-Gyne to check her out, who readily ordered her a breast ultrasound to probe deeper. With gentle nudges of encouragement and unstinting support from her then school principal, she discovered the strength to get a biopsy—a choice that would shatter the veil of uncertainty. The outcome brought a devastating revelation: Invasive Ductal Carcinoma, Stage 3C, HER2 positive. At that point, her world changed, but so did her commitment. What started as a subtle dissent morphed into the first step on a journey of unimagined strength, poise, and survival.

Category 13.2: Treatment

Successful treatment of breast cancer involves controlling side effects, adjusting to new circumstances, and finding strength from spiritual, social, and medical means. The participant's passage through the arduous process of chemotherapy and infusions was accompanied by a balanced response that included emotional strength, hope sustained by faith, and stress management. By using prayer, basking in the comfort of a close support network, and giving herself moments of respite, like taking a break from work, she developed a supportive environment open to healing. This approach is endorsed by Sebrí (2021), who also asserts that spiritual practices and social support can greatly soothe psychological distress and improve quality of life. Likewise, stress management is linked to lower levels of fatigue and better treatment outcomes by Xie et al. (2022). In the same vein, the reflections of the participant combined with the experiences of other patients provided her with comfort and understanding, a dynamic identified by García & Reyes (2022) as vital for bolstering individual improvement. Moreover, building emotional resilience in cancer.

These strategies sum up her statements below:

“Of course, number 1 is constant prayers. From the time I found out that I had cancer, the prayers were non-stop, especially during treatment when the chemo meds were dripping in my veins and during radiation while the rad machine was working. I will pray until it is over. I stopped working to avoid more stress. I also followed the advice of my Medical

Oncologist. It was not easy. It was not nice. When I compare myself to my fellow patients, I can see that they are still active, still able to wander around, and some have even returned to work.” – Wonder Woman, Transcript 2, Lines 122-124, 127-128, 141-142

For her, the strongest pillar was persistent prayer. This holy beat started the very moment she heard the word of her diagnosis and continued as a constant heartbeat throughout her complex process. With each vial of chemotherapy running through her veins and every radiation pulse resonating through her body, she raised her spirit to heaven with the quiet prayers and thanks she gave to the God whom she trusted completely. She promised to continue praying until the war was finished. To maintain her mental calmness, she took the hard decision to withdraw from work, protecting herself from the additional pressures of worries. With silent resolve, she followed her medical oncologist's advice, even when the path was rough and the burden nearly insupportable. The journey was brutal, unforgiving in its requirements. Moreover, even though she would gaze often at other patients who were still active, mobile, and some of whom even went back to work with a sense of envy, she realized that every journey is different. In the quietness of her journey, full of strife, faith, and letting go, she discovered a deeper strength that could not be quantified by movement, but only by grace.

Category 13.3: Recovery

Breast cancer survival is firmly rooted in long-term medical compliance, spiritual strength, and unshakeable availability of health-support systems. The subject's steadfast adherence to hormone therapy, bi-monthly bone interventions, and routine oncologic follow-up measures the essentiality of extended medical compliance in upholding health and warding off recurrence. Such commitment is vital, especially in hormone receptor-positive patients, as highlighted by Miller et al. (2022), who confirm that continuation of treatment dramatically increases survival rates. Nevertheless, recovery goes beyond medication only. The participant's unwavering religion became a potent source of resilience, a finding mirrored by Leão et al. (2021), who point to spirituality as being an

indispensable pillar for psychological strength for most cancer survivors. Further, the assistance of loved ones and family provided emotional sanctuary and support, solidifying the immense value of integrated survivorship care. As Tack et al. (2022) promote, the integration of medical treatment with psychosocial care develops a more holistic and empathetic process of healing, enabling patients not only to survive but to flourish.

This Integration of medical zeal, spiritual robustness, and extensive social support was expressed by the participant in the following statements:

“From January 2017 to January 2024, I had a 7-year hormone treatment. From 2017 to 2024, I received bone treatment every 6 months. Currently, my oncologist continues to monitor my health every 6 months. Yearly, I have a mammogram, breast & whole abdomen ultrasound, X-ray, second echo & ecg & hematology/chem tests every 6 months.” – Wonder Woman, Transcript 2, Lines 150-155

Between January 2017 and January 2024, she traveled the serene yet steadfast beat of a seven-year hormone therapy—each year a reflection of her unshakeable determination towards healing and survival. In addition, she patiently endured bone treatments every six months, her resilience strengthened not just by medication but by willpower and determination. Even today, her oncologist remains watchful over her well-being, checking on her every six months like a watch against relapse. Every year, she has been through a cascade of tests—mammograms, breast and whole abdomen ultrasounds, chest X-rays, 2D echocardiograms, ECGs, and a wide range of hematology and chemistry tests. Her existence is now a tapestry of steadfast watchfulness and sustained fortitude, interwoven with the strands of faith, obedience, and the unshakeable hope that each subsequent scan yields another year of mercy.

Theme 14: Commitment to Medical Services

This theme has two (2) categories: approaches/actions and coping mechanisms. The participant's dedication to medical care is reflected in their strict compliance with doctors' advice, tenacity in managing treatment costs, and adjustment to

financial difficulties, demonstrating a firm commitment to recuperation. Regardless of the expensive nature and loss of income, dependency on support networks offered both emotional and practical support. Coping mechanisms based on peer support, religion, and religious coping highlighted the unification of religion and medicine as a primary source of resilience. Thankfulness towards the divine guidance also strengthened their resilience to overcome the afflictions of treatment, with the paramount importance of both medical and spiritual care in their recovery.

Category 14. 1: Approaches/ Actions

Breast cancer therapy requires not just medical adherence but also significant financial strength and dependence on supportive systems. The subject's strict compliance with her physician's instructions, even for therapies such as Herceptin with the very high cost, indicates great resolve to place health over economic hardship. The high costs of long-term care, in addition to lost income from missed workdays, frequently required her to borrow money and rely on the kindness of friends, relatives, and cancer support groups in order to remain financially solvent. This reflects the larger trend of financial toxicity in cancer treatment, a burden that patients must bear, including a great deal of out-of-pocket and indirect expenditures. Ehsan (2023) suggests that such financial burden often forces patients to turn to borrowing and community aid, exacerbating economic and emotional hardship. The participant's narrative highlights the imperative necessity for healthcare policies that mitigate the economic burden of cancer treatment—policies that ensure survival but also dignity and quality of life throughout the process.

The patient's approach to financial burdens in surviving cancer is outlined in the following transcripts:

Our family could not imagine the expenses we incurred over the past nine years, especially the cost of Herceptin treatment. One session costs nearly 100 K. It does not help that I had to stop working. We are not rich. We spent a significant amount on my treatment and even took on additional loans. We were just ordinary government employees then, but

we have family and friends, and God provides.” – Wonder Woman, Transcript 2, Lines 156-160

Reflecting on the last decade, their family could hardly comprehend the colossal magnitude of the financial burden they had incurred, particularly the exorbitant expense of Herceptin sessions, each of which totaled nearly a hundred thousand pesos. The cost of survival was colossal, made even more burdensome by her choice to retire in order to dedicate herself to recovery. They were not born with riches; they were just simple government workers struggling to make sense of a life suddenly filled with medical expenses, borrowed money, and constant fear of how to pay the bills. However, amidst the darkness of debt and doubt, there was a light, the abiding love of loved ones, the unyielding encouragement of friends, and most of all, the divine provision of a faithful God. Through financial storms, their hearts clung to the conviction that grace had a way of finding its way. Moreover, somehow, it always did.

Category 14.2: Coping Mechanisms

Faith and spirituality, woven together with peer networks and social support, are the building blocks of resilience in adjusting to breast cancer. The participant's experience poignantly shows the role of faith not only as a private sanctuary but also as a filter through which she views her family members, friends, and doctors—as instruments of God's providence and guidance during her illness." This deep intermingling of spirituality and medicine inculcates in one a sense of appreciation and deep inner resilience, granting solace amid uncertainty. Her case illustrates how peer solidarity and community support are important pillars that strengthen one's belief that healing is not just physical. This is what research by Belhaj (2025) attests to, pointing out that the synergy of spiritual belief and social support greatly improves the overall health and resilience of breast cancer patients to enable them to walk through their journey with hope and unshaken courage.

The statement below encapsulates the participant's coping mechanisms:

“The will to survive and most of all my strong faith in God. Family, friends, doctors, and medicines were just His instruments. God is our Great Healer and Best Provider.” – Wonder Woman, transcript 2, Lines 166-167

Her determination to live, above everything else, was rooted deep in her firm and uncompromising faith in God. To her, doctors, medicines, friends, and family were but modest tools set before her by the Hand of the Divine—each one a necessary cog in the intricate web of her recovery. In her heart, God was the Great Healer, the most significant source of healing, and the Best Provider, whose infinite love and mercy sustained her through each trial. It was this holy faith that strengthened her spirit, that every trial became a testament of grace and each step forward a miracle of divine care.

Case B: Insights that the Participants Can Share with Other Women Diagnosed with Late-stage Breast Cancer

Theme 15: Introspection and Willingness to Undergo Medical Care

This theme has three (3) categories: reflections, wisdom, and mission. The patient's experiences highlight the value of determination, medical treatment, and belief in overcoming late-stage breast cancer. She urges other patients to remain resilient, consult the proper experts, and avail themselves of existing medical support programs. With advances in cancer treatment, improved outcomes are now available. Her story is an inspiration, demonstrating the value of optimism, faith, and building a support network. She emphasizes the importance of strict adherence to treatment, daily routines, and prioritizing wellness through self-care and appreciation. Finally, she sends a message of unwavering hope, informing others that life after cancer is achievable through bravery, self-empowerment, and a resolute spirit.

Category 15.1: Reflections

The volunteer underscores the crucial significance of continued efforts in the war against breast cancer, aided by medical research and accessible aid programs. Her insistence on

continuing to fight, even in late-stage occurrences of the illness, is encouraged by unprecedented gains in therapeutic methods that provide new promise for a better prognosis. In addition to state-of-the-art treatments, an intricate web of care programs, provided by the Philippine government as well as private organizations, offers vital financial support and services to alleviate the burden on cancer patients. Together, these synergistic efforts of medical advancement and supportive care stand as strong columns of inspiration, reminding everyone that no one has to fight alone. According to Hope from Within (2021), such comprehensive support kindles hope and real assistance, illuminating the way for those bravely fighting their cancer journey. The participant's reflection is elaborated in her statement:

“ Continue fighting for life. Nowadays, numerous government programs and private institutions offer their assistance to cancer patients, and many effective medicines are now available. Unlike before, when it is cancer, the patient has no other choice but to face death.” – Wonder Woman, Transcript 2, Lines 168-170

She exhorted others never to give up the struggle for life, to cling to hope no matter how steep and uncertain the path ahead. In our world today, there are numerous government programs and loving private facilities available to provide assistance and care to those facing cancer, a shining light in the darkness. The terrain of treatment has flourished with a diversity of drugs and therapies, opening doors previously tightly shut. No longer, as in the past, is the news of cancer a death sentence that seals one's fate. Today's patients are given options, options charged with optimism, potential, and the reality of survival. In this new era, no longer is the battle one of hopelessness but of strength, resilience, and the persistent quest for healing.

Category 15.2: Wisdom

Seeking the services of the proper experts is the key to successful and tailored breast cancer treatment. The subject's observation underscores the utmost importance of receiving care from oncologists who have specialized expertise in different aspects of cancer treatment. Medical

oncologists, trained in prescribing chemotherapy and other medications, complement the role of surgical oncologists who specialize in biopsies and tumor excision to ensure that every aspect of the condition is thoroughly explored. This interdisciplinary care, based on the latest advances in contemporary medicine and expanding treatment options, maximizes the potential for improved patient outcomes. The City of Hope (2024) emphasizes the necessity of such specialist consultations, while the American Cancer Society (2021) reaffirms that finding a physician with expertise in one's specific kind of cancer is essential to gaining the best care. By wisdom and knowledge, patients can walk their path in hope and confidence.

The participant's statement supports this:

“ A medical specialist, ideally a medical oncologist, should be consulted. If you are having surgery, it is advisable to consult with a surgical oncologist as they are knowledgeable about the best course of action.” – Wonder Woman, Transcript 2, Lines 174-176

She emphasized the vital importance of seeking the guidance of a medical specialist, ideally, a medical oncologist, whose expertise and insight illuminate the complex journey of cancer treatment. When surgery becomes a part of the path forward, consulting with a surgical oncologist is highly recommended, for they possess the specialized knowledge and skill to determine the most effective and precise course of action. Entrusting one's care to these dedicated professionals ensures that every step is taken with wisdom and confidence, guiding patients toward the best possible outcomes in their fight for health and healing.

Category 15.3: Mission

Breast cancer survivors are important for motivating others through their experiences, spreading hope, and forming communities of support. By the act of sharing their experiences, survivors give life to hope and inspiration for newly diagnosed patients, evoking a deep feeling of connection amid shared adversity. The long-lasting testimony of Brandi Hale, inspiring 27 years post-diagnosis, is a testament to the powerful ripple effect of such personal testimonies (Nance, 2025). Apart

from storytelling, spirituality is a building block of resilience, as studies have established that religious and spiritual interventions greatly enhance the psychological health of breast cancer survivors (Alexander, 2024). By blending personal experience with spirituality, survivors not only nourish their recovery but create affluent support communities that inspire and empower others on the complicated journey through cancer.

The transcriptions from the participant below back up this narrative:

“I would like to share my story with my fellow cancer patients. Who knows, my story might serve as an inspiration to them. This might also be God’s way of using me as His instrument.” – Wonder Woman, Transcript 2, Lines 171-173

She had a deep longing to share her experience with other cancer warriors, so that her experience could become a beacon of hope among their struggles. In her most intimate moments of reflection, she believed this sharing was not just a coincidence; it was perhaps God's gentle hand guiding her towards becoming His instrument, a channel for hope and inspiration to others who were treading similar paths. Through her testimony, she wanted to light up the darkness for the struggling ones, providing strength, trust, and the reassuring message that they are never really alone in the battle.

Theme 16: Unyielding Hope

The theme has two (2) categories: valuing health and wellness, and encouragement and positivity.

Category 16.1: Valuing Health & Wellness

Conscientious compliance with treatment regimens and disciplined self-care are the keys to successful management of advanced-stage breast cancer. The individual's reflections highlight the importance of steadfast adherence to medical regimens, the knowledge that any lapse will undermine the therapeutic process and reduce the possibility of survival. Habits acquired daily based on discipline, in addition to the elevation of preventive strategies, comprise the foundation of

maintaining well-being during the protracted journey. In addition, the intentional practice of mindfulness and self-care in a present-moment awareness helps support physical and emotional well-being, giving energy during trying times. It is also necessary to use complementary therapies with caution since some herbal supplements can interact with standard cancer therapies and decrease their effectiveness or induce adverse side effects (Brown, 2025). As Chacko (2024) also points out, unwavering adherence to medical advice is a foundation for realizing the best possible outcome in the battle against breast cancer.

The way the participant values her health and wellness is evident in her statement:

“ Follow only your doctor’s advice and prescriptions, not those who offer you to buy their medicinal and herbal supplements with no therapeutic claims.” – Wonder Woman, Transcript 2, Lines 177-178

She strongly recommended that one put undying faith only in the advice and medication of her trusted physician. In a world with so many offers of medicinal and herbal supplements with little, if any, demonstrated therapeutic merit, she warned against being influenced by such unsubstantiated claims. Genuine healing, she held, emanates from the expertise of trained professionals whose understanding and compassion are based on science and experience. By listening to only their advice, patients can tread the path of recovery with openness, security, and confidence, protected from distractions and false expectations.

Category 16.2: Encouragement and Positivity

Hope, courage, and empowerment are vital forces that sustain life beyond a breast cancer diagnosis. The participant’s profound insights reveal a resilient spirit that embraces life despite the shadows cast by late-stage breast cancer, holding steadfast to the belief that there is a meaningful existence beyond the illness. This hopeful outlook not only fuels the courage to confront adversity head-on but also ignites empowerment through purposeful action, enabling women to reclaim agency in their journey. Research by Xiong et al. (2025) supports

this perspective, demonstrating a strong positive correlation between heightened levels of hope in breast cancer patients and their overall life satisfaction. This compelling evidence underscores hope as an essential protective factor, serving as a beacon of light that guides patients through the darkest moments of their battle, fostering well-being amid profound challenges..

Her positivity is summed up in her statement:

Life continues even when breast cancer is in a late stage. There is hope as long as life remains. Have the courage to fight & beat cancer." - Wonder Woman, Transcript 2, Lines 179-180

She testified with gentle fortitude that life persists, no matter how far breast cancer has progressed to its later stages. In each breath, there is always a spark of hope—as long as life exists, the potential to struggle and prevail remains. She challenged others to call upon the bravery profound in their hearts, to be steadfast against the tempest, and to find the wild passion to overcome cancer. Her words ring with an ageless wisdom: that even in the bleakest times, hope will burn bright, guiding on the path towards healing and new life.

Cross-Case Analysis of the Themes from the Participants' Views

Influential Key Factors

Both scenarios highlight the ultimate significance of accepting and catering to health issues after being diagnosed with breast cancer. Case A calls this "Addressing Health Issues," but Case B refers to it as "Not Undermining Health," though both highlight the significance of the seriousness of medical conditions and actively working on them (Rosenberg et al., 2021; Wells et al., 2022).

Case A is "Overcoming Doubts," which represents an initial struggle with fear and uncertainty typical of breast cancer survivors. This emotional struggle is similar to Case B's experience, labeled as being "Brave against Uncertainties," which represents the strength needed to confront persistent issues like fear of recurrence of cancer and

copied with late effects (Rosenberg et al., 2021; Bjerkeset et al., 2020). These experiences corroborate with research that breast cancer survivors tend to live with persistent uncertainty regarding their health outcome and the psychological distress of survivorship (Carreira et al., 2021; Wells et al., 2022).

Both cases acknowledge the need to "Embracing the Clinical Nature" of their diagnosis, with a focus on acceptance of medical processes and interventions as imperative steps in their healing process. This acceptance aligns with the evidence-based significance of continuous monitoring, such as mammography, to track health status, regardless of challenges like functional impairment and differences in follow-up treatment (Advani et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2021). In addition, the inclusion of culturally sensitive and spiritually supportive care can also improve survivors' psychological well-being and resilience (Owoyemi et al., 2025; Leão et al., 2021; Ghaempanah et al., 2024; Pullen et al., 2024).

Ultimately, survivorship care needs to address not only late effects of physical impairment but also psychosocial concerns and quality of life issues, such as the management of fatigue, pain, psychological distress, and metabolic control, in order to enhance long-term outcomes (Nardin et al., 2020; Bjerkeset et al., 2020). Evidence-based treatments specially developed to address these multidimensional requirements are necessary in order to empower breast cancer survivors with the confidence and resilience needed to overcome the challenges of survivorship (Wells et al., 2022; Rosenberg et al., 2021).

Ways in Which Breast Imaging Helped

Case A illustrates a process of "Knowledge Build-up and Self-awareness," highlighting how breast imaging and related diagnostic processes provided vital information that helped enhance survivors' understanding of their health state. This is consistent with studies that cite awareness and education as prominent factors in empowering breast cancer survivors to effectively manage their illness and make informed choices regarding follow-up

treatment (Rosenberg et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2021).

Likewise, Case B is titled "Perception and Enlightenment," which emphasizes how breast imaging served as a central catalyst for enabling participants to acknowledge their diagnosis. Increased awareness promotes active health behaviors and knowledgeable actions, demonstrating the important role that early detection and surveillance mammography play in enhancing outcomes of survivorship, especially among disadvantaged or high-risk groups (Advani et al., 2022; Wells et al., 2022).

Both instances illustrate how learning from clinical imaging enhances not only physical health tracking but also aids in psychological empowerment and resilience, as survivors gain a better understanding of their status and navigate the complex emotional terrain of survivorship (Owoyemi et al., 2025; Leão et al., 2021).

Strategies to Survive Breast Cancer

Both cases highlight the importance of compliance with treatment and medical guidance as key elements of breast cancer survivorship. Case A emphasizes "Recovery through Compliance" and "Strengthening of Faith," stressing how the compliant follow-up of medical regimens is complemented by reliance on spirituality as a source of resilience and coping (Owoyemi et al., 2025; Leão et al., 2021). This dual strategy highlights the nuanced role of religion and religious communities in aiding psychological health throughout treatment and recovery (Ghaempanah et al., 2024; Pullen et al., 2024).

Case B similarly illustrates these concepts through "Compliance and Trust" and "Commitment to Medicine," highlighting the survivors' faith in the medical system as a crucial survival tactic. Medical trust and adherence to treatments have been shown to enhance compliance, ultimately impacting the

quality of life and clinical status of breast cancer survivors (Rosenberg et al., 2021; Wells et al., 2022). The two cases demonstrate that pairing medical compliance with psychosocial support—whether spiritual or community-based—can increase survivors' ability to cope with the challenges of treatment and follow-up (Carreira et al., 2021; Bjerkeset et al., 2020).

Insights that the Participants Can Share

Both scenarios end with a strong message of "Unyielding Hope," highlighting the strength that breast cancer survivors show despite the many physical and emotional setbacks from late-stage disease and long-term treatment consequences (Rosenberg et al., 2021; Bjerkeset et al., 2020).

Case A depicts this process as "Soul and Heart Searching," an intensely reflective and affective journey through coping that fits with evidence underlining the essential role of spirituality and meaning-making in the psychological resilience of women with breast cancer (Owoyemi et al., 2025; Leão et al., 2021).

In the same vein, Case B illustrates this experience as "Introspection and Willingness," referring to the process of deep self-reflection and acceptance of continued medical procedures. This viewpoint is consistent with research that suggests acceptance and dedication to care, informed by trust in healthcare workers and the incorporation of psychosocial assets, are crucial in navigating the complex realities of survivorship (Wells et al., 2022; Ghaempanah et al., 2024).

All these stories emphasize the importance of comprehensive care—encompassing medical, emotional, and spiritual aspects—in maintaining hope and quality of life throughout the breast cancer trajectory (Carreira et al., 2021; Pullen et al., 2024).

Implications for Practice and Recommendations

In this study, two survivors of late-stage breast cancer who were identified by breast imaging had

their lived experiences examined. Both participants were female, over forty (40), and had been cancer-free for at least a year but no more than ten years.

The study aimed to comprehend their diagnostic path, the function of breast imaging, the survival strategies they employed, and the personal insights they could offer to other women facing similar illnesses, through in-depth interviews and an exploratory case study approach.

Four main themes emerged from the study's thematic analysis: Strategies to Survive Breast Cancer, Ways Breast Imaging Helped, Influential Key Factors, and Insights to Share. According to the analysis, the individuals' primary decision-making factors were community support, fear, faith, family obligations, and doctor recommendations. In addition to being a diagnostic tool, breast imaging acted as a stimulant for treatment planning, self-awareness, and empowerment. Navigating and surviving the sickness required faith and resilience, which were bolstered by social networks.

The study's findings have significant implications for clinical practice. Healthcare providers are encouraged to manage late-stage diagnoses with a holistic, patient-centered approach that integrates not only medical processes but also emotional and spiritual care, particularly for those working in radiologic and oncologic environments. It has been shown that early imaging recommendations and empathetic communication play a crucial role in early decision-making, so providers need to prioritize them.

Medical facilities must ensure that breast imaging services are coupled with psychosocial support services. Policies facilitating access to imaging—especially to underserved women—must be fortified by public education, financing assistance programs, and culturally sensitive outreach.

In addition, survivorship programs should incorporate options for spiritual care and peer support groups to sustain the emotional nourishment of individuals after treatment. Radiologic technologists assigned as breast imaging specialists need to be taught to appreciate the psychosocial aspects of imaging, particularly among patients presenting advanced symptoms.

Finally, the insights imparted by the participants demand greater integration of patient experiences into the development of diagnostic and support policies. Empowering survivors to tell their stories

can normalize conversation regarding late-stage breast cancer and encourage early screening habits among high-risk groups. These lived experiences have the potential to revolutionize not only policy and practice but also the wider community's response to breast health.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study delved into the lived experiences of late-stage breast cancer survivors who were diagnosed through breast imaging, emphasizing the significant role of imaging as well as personal, emotional, and spiritual coping strategies survivors used during their diagnostic and healing processes. Further research is needed to better understand the nuances of survivorship and aid in enhanced patient-focused care as cancer diagnosis and treatment protocols continue to progress.

The rest of the chapter presents alternative directions for future research based on the findings of the present study and addresses areas that require further exploration. Exploring these avenues of research could help advance more inclusive, responsive, and empathetic healthcare approaches for breast cancer patients.

Future research should focus on the following areas that would expand the study further:

1. Future researchers are encouraged to increase the sample size and incorporate a wider variety of individuals from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and geographical locations. Although this research targeted two female participants in Davao City, a larger sample has the potential to create more generalizable themes and identify diverse diagnostic experiences and survival stories in different populations.
2. This research was confined to female survivors who were 40 years and older. Future studies can investigate the survivor experiences of male breast cancer survivors and younger patients, whose experiences may yield distinct emotional, cultural, and diagnostic issues, further deepening the understanding of breast cancer survivorship in diverse groups.
3. This study did not cover the caregiver experiences. Subsequent research might include research into the role, emotional paths, and realization of caregivers of

patients with end-stage breast cancer to offer a broader perspective into the diagnostic process and recovery.

4. Although this study employs a qualitative case study design, subsequent research can be enhanced by incorporating mixed-method designs that integrate qualitative stories with quantitative outcomes, such as psychological well-being, treatment fidelity, or health status. Longitudinal research would also help document survivors' experiences longitudinally and identify shifts in emotional resilience, coping, and quality of life.

5. To capture group dynamics and shared knowledge, future research can investigate the use of focus group discussions. These can reveal everyday experiences and cultural perspectives on diagnosis, faith, fear, and healing that may not emerge in individual interviews.

6. Although this study employed an extrinsic case study approach, future researchers may consider using a descriptive case study design to provide a more formalized and detailed description of the survivor process. This would allow for a richer contextual understanding of how various factors contribute to late-stage diagnosis and survivorship.

7. Future research can also benefit from conducting a constant comparative analysis, particularly when comparing multiple cases. This approach enables researchers to systematically compare data among participants to identify patterns, variations, and common themes, thereby enhancing the depth and validity of the findings.

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