RURAL AND URBAN BREAST CANCER PATIENTS:
DIFFERENTIAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN COPING RESPONSES AND
PSYCHOLOGICAL ADJUSTMENT
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ABSTRACT
Many studies have revealed that individual differences in coping responses to
diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer are associated with psychological adjustment.
The vast majority of these studies, however, focus on urban breast cancer patients and
survivors. Some of the findings derived from the studies of urban women may generalize
to their rural counterparts; yet rural breast cancer patients are likely to have distinct
experiences that influence their physical and psychological well-being. The current study
examines the possibility that the associations between coping and psychological
adjustment are moderated by the rurality of breast cancer patients. The results revealed
that several coping responses were differentially related to the well-being of rural and
urban women. Specifically, active coping and positive reinterpretation/growth were more
strongly positively correlated with the psychological well-being of rural breast cancer
patients, compared to their urban counterparts. Similarly, behavioral disengagement was
more strongly negatively correlated with the well-being of rural women. Possible reasons
for this pattern of results and implications are discussed.