

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.