SUMMARY OF WORK

Abstract

Excessive body weight (body mass index [BMI] > 25 kg/m2) is a major problem across the entire breast cancer continuum. First, an elevated BMI is a strong independent predictor of post-menopausal breast cancer risk. Second, at the time of a breast cancer diagnosis, an elevated BMI is an acknowledged negative prognostic indicator. Finally, accumulating evidence suggests that weight gain after diagnosis is associated with poorer disease-free and overall survival. Thus, being overweight poses a substantial risk for the woman with breast cancer & also is likely to exacerbate primary risk among her overweight first-degree female relatives who genetically are more susceptible to this disease. Previous studies point to the "teachable moment" created in the wake of a cancer diagnosis as an opportune time for health promotion; however, "Can we use the cancer diagnosis as a teachable moment to promote weight loss, not only among women with breast cancer, but also their overweight daughters?" & "Can we effectively utilize the mother-daughter bond to enhance the efficacy of a diet & exercise intervention to induce weight-loss in both individuals?" A feasibility study is proposed by a seasoned investigative team who has noteworthy expertise in delivering home-based, diet & exercise interventions among cancer survivors. A total of 67 dyads (each comprised of a newly-diagnosed, overweight post-menopausal breast cancer survivor & her overweight daughter), will be randomized to 1 of 3 study conditions: 1) a tailored diet & exercise intervention that emphasizes the mother-daughter bond in a "partner-assisted" approach (N=25 dyads); 2) a tailored diet & exercise intervention that is delivered independently to mothers & daughters (N=25 dyads); or 3) an attention control arm which receives standardized diet & exercise materials (N=17 dyads). The primary aim of this pilot study is to explore the uptake & acceptability of the interventions, i.e., overall accrual, use of study materials, attrition, etc. We also will explore secondary outcomes; e.g., changes in BMI, physical activity & dietary intake measured over the 12-month study period. Finally, mediators/moderators of change, as well as changes in the mother-daughter bond also will be explored. Knowledge gained from this study will be used to refine intervention materials & collect necessary data on effect sizes & variation to power a larger trial.

Statement of work

Accrual target of 67 dyads should be reached by June 1st 2008. Our efforts in the upcoming year will be devoted to developing the intervention (writing messages, finalizing workbooks), recruiting dyads, delivering the intervention, monitoring and evaluating adverse events. In the upcoming year, we plan to achieve the following goals:

1. Mail initial survey screeners to potential breast cancer survivor participants;
2. Recruit 67 dyads (matching mothers + daughters);
3. Complete baseline surveys & randomize to 1 of 3 interventions outlined above;
4. Manage all data, quality control & tracking systems;
5. Continue to monitor services delivered by outside service agreements relative to the intervention delivery (People Designs), as well as home visits made by EMSI;
6. Mail out all study intervention materials, newsletters, follow-up surveys & replacement materials.