

EXPLORING THE EXPERIENCES OF ADULT CANCER SURVIVORS ABOUT RESUMPTION OF WORK AT TERTIARY CARE HOSPITAL LAHORE, PAKISTAN

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OBJECTIVE

The Objective of this study was to Explore the Experiences of Adult Cancer Survivors about Resumption to Work.

The experiences of cancer patients return to work after cancer treatment is an extensive unknown area in cancer research locally.

METHODS

This qualitative descriptive study employed purposive sampling to recruit adult cancer survivors who met the inclusion criteria. Participants were approached during their routine follow-up visits, and those eligible were invited to participate after obtaining informed consent and explaining all aspects of the study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted, audio-recorded, and transcribed verbatim for analysis. The inclusion criteria comprised adult cancer survivors aged 30–60 years, of both genders, who were on regular follow-up post-treatment. Participants were excluded if they had:

1. Severe dementia or cognitive impairment.
2. Permanent physical disability affecting communication.
3. Treatment-related complications impairing verbal interaction.
4. Were receiving palliative care or had a Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) status

RESULTS

11 female and 08 male participants were interviewed. 02 participants were excluded due to insufficient data for analyze.4 participants did not resume their work because of illness impact. However, 12 participants returned to their jobs despite of their physical or psychological effects of cancer during survivorship.

THEMES OF THE STUDY

Themes were further elaborated by subthemes.1. Physical and Functional limitations, 2. Psychological and Emotional Readjustment. 3, Social Reactions and Stigma at the Workplace. 4, Factors Influencing the Decision to Resume Work. 5, Role of Healthcare Professionals in Facilitating Return to Work.



DISCUSSION

Resumption of work is good sign, actually it is to return to healthy life. Participants' job quality was impacted by reduced stamina and *Pace*, physical pains, and widespread weakness which results as barriers to resumption of work. Returning to work is a positive sign of recovery for cancer survivors, yet many face physical challenges such as fatigue, reduced stamina, and pain that affect job performance (Gershfeld et al., 2025). Survivors also undergo psychological adjustments, including anxiety and body image concerns, but often show emotional resilience and motivation to resume work (Zunera & Fatima, 2024). Work serves as both a financial necessity and a therapeutic outlet, helping survivors regain normalcy and independence (Wu et al., 2024). The role of healthcare professionals is crucial in this transition, offering the encouragement, guidance, and workplace documentation (Kendy et al., 2007).

LIMITATION

This study was conducted with a relatively small sample size, which may limit the breadth and representativeness of the findings. Additionally, participants were recruited from a single tertiary care hospital, potentially restricting the diversity of experiences and perspectives. As a result, the generalizability of the findings to broader populations or different healthcare settings may be limited.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the diverse experiences of adult cancer survivors returning to work. While many found work to be emotionally uplifting and financially essential, they also faced physical limitations, psychological challenges, and workplace stigma. Key motivators included financial pressure, social expectations, and the desire for independence. Healthcare professionals played a vital role by offering support, guidance, and flexibility. The findings emphasize the need for workplace awareness, family involvement, and improved cancer rehabilitation to support survivors in successful reintegration.

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