



# PACTT Lab Quarterly

ISSUE #2

## A note from our Director



Welcome to the PACTT Lab’s second quarterly newsletter! We’ve had some exciting events in our lab in the last quarter, including new personnel joining the team, lab members moving on to new challenges, publications, and presentations at national conferences.

As we move into fall we are preparing to expand some of our past projects, and hope to refine tools that will improve the access, quality of care, and shared decision making to our patients.

Enjoy this quarter’s newsletter!

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### Lab Updates: Welcoming our new program manager and oncology resident

Over the summer we welcomed two members: Sarah Leslie, MPH, our lab research coordinator, and Jakob Durden, MD, a surgical oncology research resident completing his two years of academic research under Dr. Tevis’ mentorship.

Monica Adams, PhD, started a faculty position at University of Houston in August, and Madeline Higgins, MD, has taken on new responsibilities as a Physician Hospital Administrative Fellow at UCHHealth. While they will both continue to be involved in the lab’s work, we would still like to extend a hearty congratulations to you both.

### Contact Us

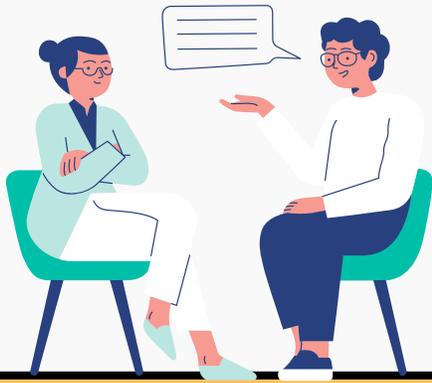
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**Website:**

<https://pacttlab.com/>





## Patient-reported quality of life one-year post lumpectomy or mastectomy: What we learned.

SUDHEER VEMURU

Breast cancer can seriously affect the quality of life (QoL) for those diagnosed. In our recent study, we looked at how patients reported feeling during the first year after two types of surgery: Lumpectomy and mastectomy.

We found that patients who had a lumpectomy were usually happier with how their breasts looked and had higher QoL measures compared to those who had a mastectomy.

However, patients who had a mastectomy with reconstruction faced more complications, which might have lowered their satisfaction. On the other hand, lumpectomy patients experienced a bigger drop in reported physical well-being, while mastectomy patients were more likely to return to their pre-surgery baseline 3-to 6-months after surgery. One possible reason is that lumpectomy patients are more likely to undergo radiation therapy after surgery and are less likely to be referred to rehabilitation therapy.

It's important to remember that every patient's experience is different, and many factors can affect their recovery. While there are still more questions to answer, our study gives helpful insights that can guide future breast cancer patients in making informed decisions about their surgery and long-term QoL.

VEMURU S, HELMKAMP L, ADAMS M, COLBORN K, PARRIS H, HUYNH V, HIGGINS M, CHRISTIAN N, AHRENDT G, BAURLE E, LEE C, KIM S, MATLOCK D, CUMBLER E, TEVIS S. LONGITUDINAL TRENDS IN PATIENT REPORTED OUTCOMES IN THE FIRST YEAR AFTER LUMPECTOMY VERSUS MASTECTOMY. ANN SURG ONC 2024 ONLINE AHEAD OF PRINT.



MADELINE HIGGINS

## Project Spotlight: Managing distress throughout breast cancer treatment

We are excited to announce a new quality improvement project at the Diane O'Connor Thompson Breast Center led by Madeline Higgins, MD. The project aims to enhance the care of breast cancer patients by improving how we assess distress. We hope that implementing an interval-based screening process will lead to timely interventions, connecting patients with necessary

support services improving the way we manage emotional, physical, and social concerns related to cancer care. With this initiative, we're taking steps to provide more personalized and compassionate care to our patients throughout their cancer journey. This study is funded by the Institute for Healthcare Quality Safety and Efficiency.

# Lab Shout Outs!



## The PACTT Lab shines at TWO American College of Surgeons (ACS) Conferences

The PACTT Lab highlighted its extensive research initiatives at the 2024 ACS Quality and Safety Conference the past July, featuring five presentations and eight posters. Our presentations addressed a wide range of important health issues, including the sexual health education needs of breast cancer patients and the long-term sustainability of interventions designed to enhance opioid prescribing practices in post-operative care.

This month, October 2024, members of the PACTT lab will again be showcasing research initiatives at the 2024 ACS Clinical Congress, with two posters featuring analysis results of the content of a breast cancer subreddit and three presentations addressing longitudinal patient-reported outcomes.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone in the lab for your hard work. Congratulations to the presenters:

Monica Adams, PhD  
Gabriella Annest, MD  
Jessie Jiang, MD  
Andrii Khomiak, MD

Abigail Ludwigson, MD  
Alex Verosky, MD  
Cassidy Yoshida, MD

## Lab director named a 2024 Richard L Bynny Fellow in Leadership

Sarah Tevis, MD, associate professor of surgery and member of the Institute for Healthcare Quality, Safety & Efficiency, has been named a 2024 Richard L. Bynny Fellow in Leadership from the Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society. Fellows are awarded funds to develop their leadership skills through a specific year-long project. Sarah's project will focus on patient-reported outcomes, shared decision-making, and interventions to enhance quality of care through the development of a clinical sexual health program for women with breast cancer.

# Welcome to the team!



**Sarah Leslie, MPH**  
Lab Research Coordinator

Sarah, a Texafornian, moved to Colorado from Washington DC in 2012. She is a veteran paratrooper and enlisted engineer of the US Army, and received her BS in Medical Anthropology at the University of Maryland and her MPH from the Colorado School of Public Health.

She is passionate about social justice and equitable access to healthcare services, and is drawn to research framed through these lenses.

In her free time she can be found with her nose buried in a book, cooking, crafting, or playing outside.



**Jakob Durden, MD**  
General Surgery Resident

Jakob is a general surgery resident at the University of Colorado and has completed two years of clinical training prior to joining the PACTT lab. He is interested in pursuing a fellowship in surgical oncology.

Jakob was raised in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia and obtained his undergraduate degree in biology at Cornell University followed by a medical doctorate at the University of Virginia.

In his free time he enjoys skiing, rock climbing, and hiking with his golden doodle Piper.



**Pet of the Quarter**  
Kaya

You'd never guess that behind that smile is an old soul. Kaya is a 14 year old cattle dog, chow, and mystical beast mix. She has three missions in life:

- (1) To always be the goodest girl.
- (2) To play fetch and pretend she does not understand what you mean when you say "drop it".
- (3) To keep the evil squirrels from digging into her mom's garden bed.

Her smile is infectious, and the eyes she gives you when you're petting her in just the right spot will make your heart melt.

# Currently Recruiting!



Understanding and promoting quality of life and sexual well-being after breast cancer treatment.

We are recruiting breast cancer patients to participate in a series of online surveys that will help us understand the quality of life over the course of treatment and survivorship.

If you are interested in learning more about this study and potentially participating, please follow the link or QR code below and complete the interest form:

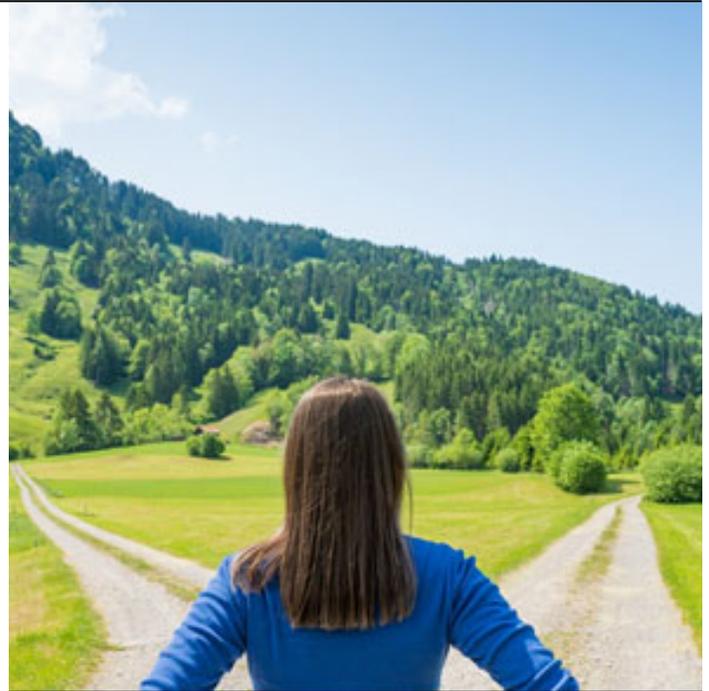
<https://redcap.link/PROsurvey>



## Breast Surgery Decision Aid

This study focuses on evaluating a patient decision aid (DA) designed for early-stage breast cancer patients making a decision between lumpectomy and mastectomy.

It aims to assess the content, development process, and effectiveness of the DA, while also gathering feedback from patients and healthcare professionals to refine its layout and ensure its suitability.



INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING IN A STUDY?  
CONTACT [BREASTSURGERYSTUDY@CUANSCHUTZ.EDU](mailto:BREASTSURGERYSTUDY@CUANSCHUTZ.EDU)

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all our partners, staff, and, most importantly, our patients. Your unwavering support and dedication are the cornerstone of our success. Thank you for being an integral part of our journey and for continuing to inspire us every day.

*Thank you!*

