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Physical and psychological distress associated with pediatric cancer treatment

Hayden Simpson Leeds

Baylor College of Medicine, USA

Research in the field of pediatric oncology has focused on survival rates and toxicity associated with new treatments with less attention being paid to the management of symptoms or the psychosocial development of the patient. This study aimed at providing a preliminary description of the variety of symptoms experienced by pediatric patients during chemotherapy treatment. Understanding symptoms will help providers better understand distress and the associated psychosocial development of patients. Understanding salient developmental stages and general functioning will allow us to better comprehend symptom distress. By better understanding barriers to reporting symptoms, and the measures patients and their caregivers take to relieve symptoms, providers can deliver better symptom management and education to families. Six adolescents (ages 12-18) and ten children (ages 7-11) completed the age appropriate Memorial Symptom Assessment Scale (MSAS). Each patient and their caregiver completed a semi-structured interview. Six large themes were identified: caregiver/patient expectations, symptoms and everyday functioning, symptoms and chemotherapy, worries and sadness, physical changes, and symptom management. This preliminary data points to interesting phenomena that occur when pediatric patients are faced with a diagnosis of cancer and subsequent chemotherapy. Further research into psychological distress and symptom management is warranted. Many psychological symptoms, such as sadness and anxiety, were directly related to the patients' physical conditions and a dynamic interplay between the two appears to exist. This research illustrates the tendency for psychological distress in the pediatric population to manifest itself in a wide variety of ways that are different than those observed in adult populations.

hsleeds@texaschildrens.org

Cyber bullying: Emotional effects and intervention program for adolescents with and without disabilities

Tali Heiman and Dorit Olenik-Shemesh

The Open University of Israel, Israel

The prevalence of cyber-bullying among schoolchildren appears to be widespread, mainly during adolescence. The internet and, in particular, social networking have become an inseparable part of children's daily lives, providing a new form of social space in which they might be exposed to online bullying. Cyber-bullying refers to a negative activity aimed at deliberate and repeated harm, by a person or a group of people in order to harm another person, by using a variety of electronic media. Adolescents diagnosed with disabilities represent a specific population of special needs that manifest increased risk for engagement in peer bullying behavior as perpetrators or victims. Thus, understanding the relationship between these students and cyber-bullying may help in promoting efficient coping strategies for this population. The presentation will describe the involvement in cyber-bullying among adolescents with and without disabilities, as related to emotional aspects (loneliness, depression, support) and an intervention program in order to increase awareness and to provide useful tools to reduce the cyber-bullying incidents. Results from various studies including 2000 children and adolescents in Israel revealed that significantly more students with disabilities reported being cyber-victims, and cyber perpetrator compared to students without disabilities; student who were cyber-victims reported on greater loneliness, depressive mood and lower social support. Intervention program included five meetings and workshops with 365 students (51.4% boys) aged 12-18. Findings revealed that after the program fewer students reported being cyber-victimised (22.5% vs. 15.5%) or cyber-bullies (7.4% vs. 4.95%). These findings are important in order to raise awareness and the ability to deal with this phenomenon, to provide effective tools to cope with, and to allocate resources to prevent cyber-bullying.

tali.heiman@gmail.com