Patient and Family Education in Pediatric Oncology: A Systematic Review from the Children’s Oncology Group

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Introduction

- Cancer is extremely stressful for the pediatric patient and family
- Essential education must be delivered
- Nurses are responsible to educate
- Best educational methods have not been identified

PROJECT AIM: To determine current knowledge of effective education for newly diagnosed pediatric oncology patients and their family

Content

PATIENT: CANCER TOPICS
Knowing what will happen
Procedures
Prognosis
Etiology
Treatment plan and side effects
Everything (even the “hard stuff”)
Adolescents/Young Adults: sexuality and fertility

PATIENT: PSYCHOSOCIAL TOPICS
Interacting and communicating with friends
Getting back to school or making job/career plans
Learning how to adjust
Relationships and impact with family

PARENT: CANCER TOPICS
Diagnosis and understanding the disease
Prognosis
Further testing and coping with painful procedures
Treatment plan and side effects
Recognizing problems
Medical dictionary
Where to get answers for questions

PARENT: PSYCHOSOCIAL TOPICS
Emotional impact on the child
Day-to-day management
Making informed decisions
Basic self-care
Impact of diagnosis on the family

Literature Search

- Databases: MEDLINE, CINAHL, Cochrane Library
- Keywords: pertinent to pediatric oncology
- Limit: English language

Yield

- Initial: 2779 articles
- Final: 83 articles

Timing

No specific time preference for education

Parents expect cancer information during the initial oncologist meeting but are overwhelmed and need time to process the diagnosis before teaching can begin

Recommendations

1. Use written materials, short verbal discussion, and audio recordings
2. Give parents time to process the diagnosis before teaching
3. Include cancer specific content
4. Include psychosocial content
5. Provide anticipatory education
6. Consider patient’s education and developmental level
7. Give consistent information by consistent healthcare providers, use understandable vocabulary, and provide time for questions
8. Consider parent’s emotional state, language barriers, cultural issues, and social issues
9. Use structured teaching tools for education and discharge instructions
10. Use age-appropriate, interactive material when educating siblings

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