

Disease-related Experiences of Mothers on Parenting Children with Type 1 diabetes

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Background & Purpose

Raising and parenting a school-age child with type 1 diabetes is not easy. Primary caregiver, the mother, needs to plan and monitor many diabetes care-related practices so the child can have a better glycemic control. However, the literature has seldom investigated primary caregivers' disease-related parenting experiences for children with type 1 diabetes at the co-regulation stage. Hence, this study aimed to understand the disease-related parenting experiences of mothers of children with type 1 diabetes.

Methods

A phenomenological approach was used and in-depth interviews were performed with ten mothers of 6-12-year-old school-age children with type 1 diabetes selected by purposive sampling. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and were analyzed using the Giorgi's phenomenological analysis method.

Results

This study interviewed a total of 10 mothers of children with type 1 diabetes. Their mean age was 39 years old. The children participating in the interviews were mainly 2nd and 6th graders. The mean years of disease onset were 4.5 years, with a minimum of 3.5 years and a maximum of 6.1 years. Results showed four major themes were emerged: adjusting external life, promoting inner strength, seeking balance, and returning to a normal life.

(1) Adjusting external life: Primary caregivers attempt to use 9 methods, such as appropriate rewards, reasonable punishments, and experiencing symptoms, to help children develop a proper attitude, good living habits, and health-promoting behaviors or to prevent the occurrence of complications during their parenting of children with type 1 diabetes; (2) Promoting inner strength: It is difficult to control blood sugar level and to maintain one's health for children with type 1 diabetes. Children tend to experience frustrations or depression due to their disease.

Therefore, primary caregivers adopted strategies, including mutual sharing and offering hope, to enable children to think about the future and increase their perception of reality and inner confidence so as to further strengthen external disease control behaviors; (3) Seeking balance: during the parenting of children with type 1 diabetes, primary caregivers faced conflicts about blood sugar level control, such as children's emotions and children's dietary preferences. During these moments, mothers implemented various strategies, such as catering to children's needs or transferring their attention to relieve the conflicts during parenting and to achieve harmony in the parent-child relationship; (4) Returning to normal life: mothers perceived that type 1 diabetes is a long-term chronic disease, and children suffering from it still need to experience a normal school life. Therefore, they used different methods, such as integrating resources and doing everything on their own, in order to help children return to a normal life, to make up for the deficiency of children's self-care, to monitor children's conditions at school, and to reduce the occurrence of dangers.

Conclusions

An understanding of the disease-related parenting experiences of mothers of children with type 1 diabetes will motivate health professionals to promote the philosophy of family-centered nursing care so individualized interventions and measures can be developed and implemented.

Keywords

Type 1 Diabetes, School-age Children, Disease-related Parenting Experiences

Biography

Chi-Wen Chang is an assistant Professor at Department of Nursing, College of medicine, Chang Gung University, Taiwan (R.O.C.). Her research interests are in issues of children with type 1 DM. She has published more than 10 papers in well-known journals

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