Title: A Study of the Care Needs in Parents of Precocious Puberty Children

Objective: To explore the parents’ perspective and care needs in the caring for their precocious puberty children by qualitative research method.

Methods: This study was conducted on the father or mother of precocious puberty children in the pediatric ward in a medical center in northern Taiwan. Using one-by-one and face-to-face interviews, adopting an open-ended and non-guided approach, allowing the subjects to share their real feelings and ideas. The researchers selected eligible subjects in the pediatric ward and explained the study purpose and process to them, and then required the subjects’ agreement to fill in the informed consent including the recording of the interviews. Then the researchers use semi-structured interview guidelines for data collection in an undisturbed room. The interview guideline questions include: How do you notice that your child has secondary sex characteristics development? What reason makes you decide to take your child for medical treatment? What are your views and ideas when your child is diagnosed with precocious puberty? What is the most troublesome and stressful things when you are seeking for medical help? How do you adjust yourself? Have you tried natural remedies to improve your child’s precocious puberty? How do you think about the effectiveness of your child's medical treatment? What kind of service do you expect from the hospitals, in order to improve the care of precocious puberty children? Within 12 hours after the interview, the interview content was transcribed into a text draft for data analysis.

Results: A total of 20 subjects, 18(90%) were mothers, and 85% of the children were female. The study found that the parents of precocious puberty children hold a perspective that “the child’s growth is the parents’ responsibility”. And the interviews summed up three themes. The first one is “noticing precocious puberty”: the content includes the child’s development of secondary sex characteristics, the googling for solutions, and the worrisome about the effects of precocious puberty. The second theme is “coping precocious puberty”: the content includes the pressure of medical treatment, the children’s unwillingness to cooperate, and the bet to receive additive risks. The third theme is “living with precocious puberty”: the content includes adjusting the expectations, adapting to the medical treatment routine, and accepting the ultimate results. The three themes represent the evolving process of the issues confronted by the families from the very beginning that the parents find out the appearance of secondary sex characteristics. They then go through the internet to gather relevant information with the worrisome of the child’s growth. In every way, the parents accompanied their children to face the challenges together and try to resolve the conflicts triggered by disciplines of diet, sleep and exercise. They may also bear the stress from limited effect of natural treatment and the golden time of growth and make the inevitable choice of receiving medical treatment. These all then lead the family to adapt and accept the outcomes of precocious puberty. In the end, the parents adjust their expectations of the children’s heights, well-plan the treatment course in advance and make consensus with their children of the daily routines with proper food and regular sport activities.

Conclusions and suggestions: The precocious puberty poses several issues among the parents, children and medical advices as presented in the results. And this study can provide reference of
precocious puberty care for medical institutions while the medical professionals face the care needs of the parents. Considering the cultural characteristics, adjustments, interactions and so on in a family, the professionals can thus provide relevant information and guidance to help and support the parents for coping the care of precocious puberty children.

Title:
A Study of the Care Needs in Parents of Precocious Puberty Children

Keywords:
precocious puberty, care needs and qualitative research

References:

Abstract Summary:
This study is designed to explore the parents’ ideas, struggles and care needs in the caring for their precocious puberty children by qualitative research method.

Content Outline:
1. Objective
2. Methods
3. Results
4. Conclusions and suggestions

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