

Psychosocial Wellbeing of Young Adult Survivors of Childhood and Adolescent Cancer: An Integrative Review

Ameera Adel Amin Fayad BSN, RN; Yu-Ping Chang, PhD, RN, FGSA



Introduction

Advancements in cancer treatment have increased the number of childhood and adolescent cancer survivors significantly. The majority of childhood and adolescent cancer survivors will proceed to young adulthood. However, due to late effects of treatment, survivors experience a wide range of physical and psychological sequelae that impede their ability to meet the psychosocial demands of young adulthood.

Objectives

The purpose of this integrative review is to understand the prevalence and magnitude of psychological and social sequelae that survivors of childhood and adolescent cancer experience during young adulthood (YA).

Methods

Search Strategies

- Systematic literature search was conducted on three databases: CINAHL, MEDLINE, PsycINFO
- From January 1999 to April 2017.
- The search was limited to primary source peer reviewed articles published in English language.
- A total of 24 key words and its related MeSh terms related to the review purpose were used.
- To ensure search accuracy and retrieval of a maximum number of related literature, an expert librarian reviewed the search strategy.

Selection Criteria

- Quantitative and qualitative studies
- The sample is young adults between the age of 19-39 year, who had a cancer diagnosis before the age of 18 years old.
- The study reported at least one psychological or social outcome variable.

Data analysis

Related data were extracted from eligible studies, and entered into a matrix, then data were categorized using a code scheme derived from Ferrell & Hassey Dow, 1997 Quality of Life Model. Data were analyzed using Whittemore & Knafl, 2005 proposed methodology for integrative review.

Results

- 64 studies met the review criteria, 54 were quantitative and 10 were qualitative.
- The majority of quantitative studies were cross-sectional in design.
- Two thirds of studies were conducted in the United States, while the remaining studies were conducted in Canada, Australia, Japan, Israel, and Europe (Sweden, United Kingdom, Italy, The Netherland, Denmark, Austria, Germany, Greece).
- Synthesis of the studies revealed that a subset of young adult survivors are at risk for having impaired psychological well being and are less likely to fulfill their social roles compared to their healthy peers.

Psychological Well-being

- Studies that examined mental health status of young adult survivors displayed conflicting results.
- Fear and worries were salient in survivors life during young adulthood; fear of having second cancer, fear of passing cancer to offspring and worries about their fertility status.

Prevalence of Selected Psychological Problems

Anxiety	10% - 14%
Depression	5% - 38%
Post Traumatic Stress Disorder	3% - 22%
Post Traumatic Stress Symptoms	7% - 75%
Mood Disturbance	24%
Suicidality	13%
Somatic Distress	13%

Social Well-being

- Young adult survivors reported impaired sibling relationships. Survivors relationship with parents were complex; they felt grateful but also were angry and upset with their parents for overprotecting them and for withholding information regarding their cancer.
- Survivors were more likely to have worse social functioning, impaired friendship, low marital rate, experience social isolation, and have impaired love/sex relationship.
- Survivors had higher unemployment rate, were more likely to be rejected from a job, and were less likely to serve in the military.
- Survivors had lower educational attainment than healthy population. They were less likely to graduate high school, and college, and more likely to utilize special education

Conclusion

The psychosocial life of survivors is affected considerably during young adulthood by their childhood cancer experience. Careful assessment and interventions are needed to alleviate the suffering of this population.

References

- Ferrell, B. R., & Hassey Dow, K. (1997). Quality of life among long-term cancer survivors. *Oncology*, 11(4), 565-571
- Whittemore, R., & Knafl, K. (2005). The integrative review: updated methodology. *Journal Of Advanced Nursing*, 52(5), 546-553

