Psychological & Psychosocial Deficits Among Pediatric Survivors of Hematological Neoplasms

Elizabeth Ross
ejeanross1@gmail.com

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Pediatric cancer patients are surviving cancer and living longer, relatively healthy lives due to advances in pediatric cancer therapies. Even with modern medical research and technology, pediatric cancer is still the leading cause of death for children and adolescents in the United States. Based on statistics from the American Cancer Society (ACS), hematological cancers, such as leukemia and lymphoma, are the leading type of non-solid malignancies in children (ACS, 2016). For decades pediatric cancer survival rates have steadily increased with an overall cure rate of over 75%.

While it is great that the survivor rate has and is steadily increasing year after year, the intense curative therapy that is given to produce the high rates of survival can cause long-term effects on the body including psychological and psychosocial deficits. This integrative literature review (ILR) was aimed at describing the prevalence of late effect psychological and psychosocial deficits and their risk factors in pediatric survivors of hematological cancers.

Methods

DePaul WorldCat, Local, PubMed, and CINAHL Complete databases search was performed. The following Medical Subject Heading (MeSH) terms and search details were used and the Boolean operator AND was utilized to get a highly relevant search yield psychosocial adjustment AND hematologic neoplasms. CINAHL Complete search was completed using the following search terms psychological AND survivor AND blood cancer. The search yielded 31 and 22 articles for PubMed and CINAHL Complete, respectively. DePaul WorldCat Local search was performed using the following search details: psychological deficit and cancer survivor and hematology. It yielded 179 articles. All abstracts were reviewed one by one independently by two researchers. Articles were included in the final analysis if they reported on psychological or social deficits among pediatric hematological cancer survivors who exhibits psychological and social deficits were incorporated in this ILR. The American Cancer Society (ACS) defines cancer survivors as patients who were diagnosed with cancer 5 years or longer ago. The prevalence of depression (58.8%), anxiety (44.1%), mood problems (32.3%), poor psycho-social QOL domains (32.2%), social problems (26.4%), attention problems (25.9%), behavioral problems (14.7%), post-traumatic stress disorder (11.7%), risky behaviors (8.7%) was higher among pediatric hematological cancer survivors than in the normal population or matched control groups. The prevalence of depression (58.8%) was significantly higher among pediatric hematological cancer survivors than in the normal population or matched control groups.