

LIFE AFTER CHILDHOOD LEUKAEMIA

Exploring the Relationship Between Social Support, Resilience and Quality of Life Amongst Children and their Parents

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Background

The post-treatment phase for leukaemia survivors & their parents is a critical, yet under-researched time, marked by significant challenges that affects quality of life (Conway-Keller et al., 2024). Research highlights the essential role of social support in sustaining well-being, yet this support often declines once treatment ends (Inhestern et al., 2020). Additionally, resilience which is influenced by social support, plays a key role in maintaining quality of life (Park et al., 2022). However, there is a lack of in-depth research on the relationship between social support, resilience & quality of life among childhood leukaemia survivors & their parents. This study seeks to fill this gap.

Method

Quantitative cross-sectional surveys assessing social support, resilience & quality of life were conducted separately with children and parents of children aged under 18 years who successfully completed treatment for any type of leukaemia within the past 5 years.

Recruitment occurred through 1) the leukaemia clinic in Children's Health Ireland at Crumlin, 2) contacting various cancer organisations, 3) through social media.

Three versions of the questionnaire were designed; a version for children aged 8-12 yrs, a version for children aged 13-17 yrs, & a version for parents/guardians.

Results

In total, 70 parents & 35 children aged 7-17 yrs completed surveys.

Among parents, a significant relationship was found between social support, resilience & mental well-being. However, contrary to expectations, no significant relationship was found between social support, resilience & physical health.

Amongst the younger children (12 yrs & younger), greater social support, especially from parents, teachers, & classmates, was associated with higher resilience, which in turn contributed to better quality of life, particularly in psychosocial aspects. However, this relationship was less pronounced in older children (13-17 yrs), suggesting that other factors may influence their quality of life post-treatment.

Conclusion

Without adequate social support & resilience, both children & their parents risk facing ongoing challenges that can impact their quality of life. Addressing these elements is essential not only for helping children & their parents navigate life after leukaemia, but also for ensuring they thrive.

Holistic support is key to overall health, happiness, & well-being long after treatment ends.

References

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