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Achieving Increased Quality Outcomes for Pediatric Oncology through Psychosocial Screening: An Integrative Research Review

Kaitlyn Williams MSN, RN-BC

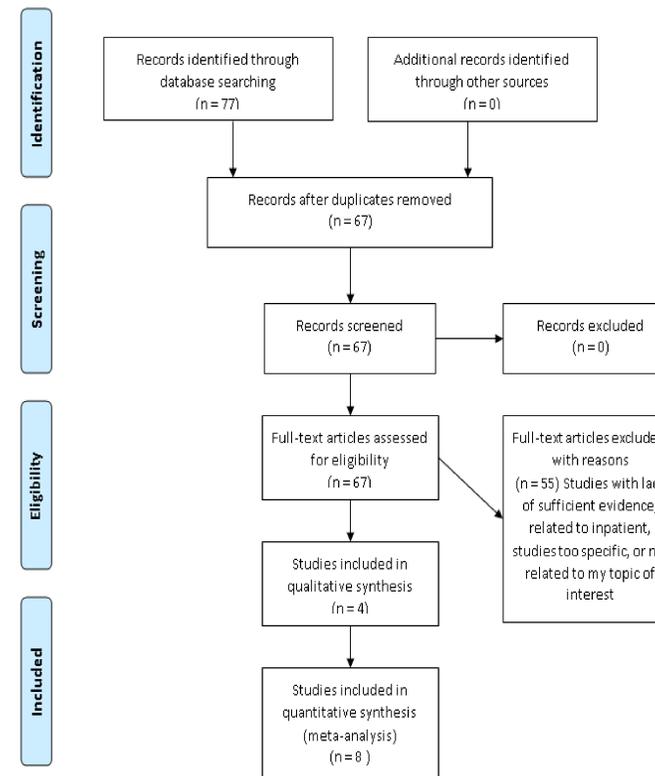
BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

- ❖ The importance screening of psychosocial risk factors to identify specific psychosocial needs of children with cancer has been recognized by major professional organizations. However, systematic screening of these risk factors at diagnosis is rare in pediatric oncology practice (Kazek, et. al., 2012).
- ❖ Children diagnosed with cancer often experience both short and long-term stressors that significantly impact their quality of life and ability to cope (Wiener et. al., 2017).
- ❖ The true impact of screening implementation into clinical practice is not yet well understood (McCarthy et. al., 2016).
- ❖ Anxiety and depression can have negative implications on the quality of life and even survival outcomes. These problems highlight the importance of early identification and intervention to avoid long term emotional distress and negative health outcomes (Wiener et. al., 2017).

METHODOLOGY

- ❖ An integrated review of the literature was performed using the methodology described by Brown (2015) and Whittemore and Knafle (2006).
- ❖ Cochrane, CINAHL, PubMed and Medline Complete Nursing/Academic were searched using the terms “pediatric oncology” and “psychosocial screening”.
- ❖ Search criteria was limited to “full text” between the years 2012-2018 for all databases.
- ❖ Inclusion criteria included studies involving the evaluation of psychosocial screening, psychosocial interventions, and improving pediatric cancer treatment outcomes.
- ❖ The original search identified 77 articles. After screening the articles, 10 duplicate articles were removed, and 55 articles were excluded for various reasons ranging lack of sufficient evidence, related to inpatient, studies too specific or not related to my topic of interest.
- ❖ Findings from the studies were synthesized for comparative analysis of results.

LITERATURE SEARCH FLOW DIAGRAM



- ❖ Findings support the importance of integrating psychosocial risk screening into clinical care (Kazak et. al., 2017; Nicolaas et. al., 2016; Barrera et. al., 2012; Parsons et. al., 2013).
- ❖ Early psychosocial identification and intervention may reduce adverse psychological effects of childhood cancer treatment (Barrera et. al., 2014; Parsons et. al., 2013; Nicolaas et. al., 2016).
- ❖ Study suggests that interventions should be flexible and tailored to the needs of parents and families based on diagnoses (Hocking et. al., 2013).

CLINICAL IMPLICATIONS

- ❖ The use of early psychosocial screening in pediatric oncology patients can be effective in reducing psychosocial stressors during treatment. Emphasis should be placed on determining what barriers clinicians have in providing psychological screening and timely interventions.

CONCLUSION

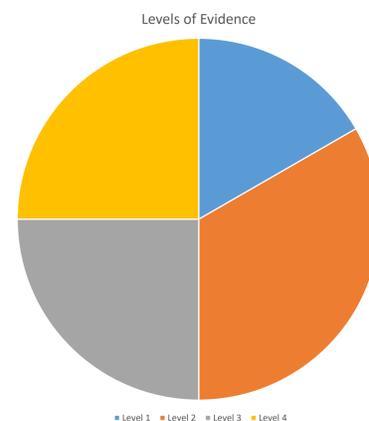
- ❖ While the synthesized research does not support the effectiveness of early psychosocial screenings in reducing anxiety, family stress and child coping in pediatrics; psychosocial screening over the course of cancer treatment was positively correlated with reduced hospitalizations and fewer negative health consequences (Barrera, et al., 2012; McCarthy, et al., 2016).
- ❖ Further research including level 1 evidence, and randomized control trials, are still needed to definitively answer this question.

REFERENCES

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RESULTS

- ❖ Seventy-seven articles were initially identified; Twelve included in final sample.
- ❖ Level of evidence rated using evidence pyramid published by Long & Gannaway and Appraisal Guides by Brown (2015; 2018).



RESEARCH QUESTION

“Can frequent psychosocial screenings, beginning at diagnosis, reduce the oncologic emergencies and complications in pediatrics with cancer in the outpatient setting?”

