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

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**BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE**

- The importance 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).

**RESEARCH QUESTION**

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

**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.

**RESULTS**

- Seventy-seven articles were initially identified; Twelve included in final sample.
- Results suggest that psychosocial risks can contribute to health disparities and universal screening may address these disparities by identifying potential risk factors (Kazek et. al., 2012; Nicolaas et. al., 2016).
- Number of days in hospital was strongly and positively associated with the amount of psychosocial services families received in the first 8 weeks following diagnosis (McCarthy et. al., 2016).
- Findings highlight the importance of early identification and intervention to avoid long-term emotional distress and negative health consequences (Wiener et. al., 2017).
- The evidence consistently indicate that attention to parental mental health in pediatric oncology patients is imperative (Kearney et. al., 2015; Nicolaas et. al., 2015; Kazek et. al., 2012; Nicolaas et. al., 2016).

**LITERATURE SEARCH FLOW DIAGRAM**

**LITERATURE SYNTHESIS**

**REFERENCES**

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