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Lived experiences of parents with children diagnosed with cancer in Trinidad: Challenges and coping strategies

Onuoha P, Alexander D, Ali Jadoobir D, Bain Bedeshi G, Lyder George N, Mitchell C, Vitalis T and Mootoo G
The University of the West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago

Aim: The aim of this study is to explore the lived experiences of parents pertaining to how cancer in their family affected their lives. In particular the study detailed the participants' challenges and the strategies they adopted in dealing with the challenges.

Methodology: An exploratory phenomenology method was used to guide the study. The participants were selected from the institution of the Paediatric Oncology Clinic at The Wendy Fitzwilliam's Paediatric Hospital. Triangulation of different strategies namely, a focus group interview and key informant interviews were utilized to collect data from ten parents. The data was audiotaped, transcribed and organized into codes and themes.

Results: In the main, findings revealed three main themes: reliance on spirituality to cope, psychosocial challenges, and social support system. This study revealed that the lived experiences of parents who care for their children diagnosed with cancer, feel like a never-ending struggle.

Discussion: Regardless of the substantial progress in the treatment of Cancer, childhood Cancer is still emotionally, physically, and psychologically challenging for parents and nurses. This was discussed vis-a-vis literature.

Recommendation: The theme highlighted in this study offer opportunities for additional qualitative and quantitative research in the field of oncology and its impact on Trinidadian parents and the Trinidad family system. Therefore further research is needed from the nursing perspective that should be conducted with greater emphasis in paediatric oncology.

Philip.onuoha@sta.uwi.edu