

The Experiences and Needs of Mothers' of Children With Cancer in Coping With the Child's Disease

Authors : Maarja Karbus, Elsbet Lippmaa, Kadri Kõöp, Mare Tupits

Abstract : Aim: The aim is to describe the experiences and needs of mothers of children with cancer in coping with the child's illness. Background: Cancer affects different life areas. Especially if it is a child, in this case the whole family is involved. Loved ones are mentally affected, there are limitations, and life changes need to be made to make the whole treatment regimen and recovery as comfortable as possible. Also, the whole process is expensive and time consuming. The research is part of a larger project that covers the experiences and needs of parents of children with chronic illness and coping strategies related to the child's illness. Design: Qualitative, empirical, descriptive research. Method: Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data and inductive content analysis was used to analyze the data. The interviews were conducted in the autumn of 2020, 5 respondents participated in the research. Results and Conclusions: The research revealed that the mothers' experiences of coping with a child's disease included health-related experiences, material aspects, changes in lifestyle, support systems and contact with professionals. Regarding the organizational and material aspects of life, the subjects presented experiences with economic problems, adaptation of changes in lifestyle, access to information and changes in the treatment process. With regard to health, the respondents identified experiences with the mother's physical and mental health and experiences with the health of an ill child. The experience of different support systems was related to the support of family, friends, acquaintances, various organizations and specialists. Experiences with specialist support included experiences with family relationships and positive and negative experiences with staff. The mothers' needs in dealing with the child's disease included the mother's emotional needs, the support of other family members, and the need for various support systems and services. The needs of coping with the child were the need for understanding, support, confidence, the need to be strong and courageous, the need to ignore one's own needs, and the need for personal time and rest. The needs of other family members included the needs of an ill child and the need to pay attention to other children in the family. The needs of different supporters and services were related to different helpers and different services.

Keywords : cancer, mother, coping, child, need, experience, illness

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