

## The Experiences and Needs of Fathers' of Children With Cancer in Coping With the Child's Illness

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**Abstract :** Aim: The aim of the research is to describe the experiences and needs of fathers' of children with cancer in coping with the child's disease. Background: Today, about 80% of children diagnosed with malignancy in developed countries survive. Despite the positive statistics, recovery is not always certain, treatment is often very intensive and long-term. Cancer is affecting an increasing number of the population, which is increasing the demand for quality care, but the nature of expected care is currently unclear. This topic is important for the development of professional practice, as nurses complain that their knowledge to deal with the relatives of a patient with a difficult diagnosis is limited and would therefore like additional information to deal with the situation. Design: Qualitative, empirical, descriptive research. Method: The data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analysed by inductive content analysis method. Interviews were conducted during Autumn 2020. 4 subjects participated in the research. Results and Conclusions: The thesis revealed that fathers had different experiences and needs in dealing with the child's illness. Fathers' experiences of coping with child's diseases encompassed experiences with information, social relationships, healthcare, changes in personal health and experiences regarding the child. Regarding information, the respondents pointed out bad experiences with the availability of information and the ability to convey the necessary information. Experiences regarding social relationships included experiences with relatives and strangers. Regarding healthcare, fathers mentioned experiences related to the child's health and healthcare professionals. In regards to personal health, fathers pointed out negative changes in their mental and physical health. In relation to the child, the subjects revealed experiences regarding changed values, way of life and raising the child. According to the research, fathers' needs in relation to dealing with child's cancer included material, social, and spiritual needs. In regard to material needs, fathers pointed out the need for state assistance and the needs related to the surrounding environment. The needs concerning social belonging involved needs for a driving force and involvement in the treatment process. Regarding spiritual needs, fathers expressed mixed feelings towards the need for outside and professional help.

**Keywords :** father, coping, cancer, child, experience, need

**Conference Title :** ICNH 2022 : International Conference on Nursing and Healthcare

**Conference Location :** London, United Kingdom

**Conference Dates :** September 22-23, 2022