

## Determinants of Psychological Distress in Teenagers and Young Adults Affected by Cancer: A Systematic Review

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**Abstract :** Background & Significance: Over half of Teenagers and Young Adults (TYAs) say that they experience psychological distress after cancer diagnosis and TYAs with cancer are at higher risk of developing distress compared to other age groups. Despite this there are no age-appropriate interventions to help TYAs manage distress and there is a lack of conceptual understanding of what causes distress in this population group. This makes it difficult to design a targeted, developmentally appropriate intervention. This review aims to identify the key determinants of distress in TYAs affected by cancer and to propose an integrative model of cancer-related distress for TYAs. Method: A literature search was performed in Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, MEDLINE, PsycINFO, CINAHL, EMBASE and PsycArticles in May-June, 2022. Quantitative literature was systematically reviewed on the relationship between psychological distress experienced by TYAs affected by cancer and a wide range of factors i.e. individual (demographic, psychological, developmental, and clinical factors) and contextual (social/environmental) factors. Evidence was synthesized and correlates were categorized using the Biopsychosocial Model. The full protocol is available from PROSPERO (CRD42022322069) Results: Thirty eligible quantitative studies met criteria for the review. A total of twenty-six studies were cross-sectional, three were longitudinal and one study was a case control study. The evidence on the relationship between the socio-demographic, illness and treatment-related factors and psychological distress is inconsistent and unclear. There is however consistent evidence on the link between psychological factors and psychological distress. For instance, the use of cognitive and defence coping, negative meta-cognitive beliefs, less optimism, a lack of sense of meaning and lower resilience levels were significantly associated with higher psychological distress. Furthermore, developmental factors such as poor self-image, identity issues and perceived conflict were strongly associated with higher distress levels. Conclusions: The current review suggests that psychological and developmental factors such as ineffective coping strategies, poor self-image and identity issues may play a key role in the development of psychological distress in TYAs affected by cancer. The review proposes a Positive Developmental Psychology Model of Distress for Teenagers and Young Adults affected by cancer. The review highlights that implementation of psychological interventions that foster optimism, improve resilience and address self-image may result in reduced distress in TYA's with cancer.

**Keywords :** cancer, determinant, psychological distress, teenager and young adult, theoretical model

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