

A Systematic Review on Factors/Predictors and Outcomes of Parental Distress in Childhood Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia

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Abstract : Distress among parents of children with acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL) is common during treatment and can persist several years post-diagnosis, impacting the adjustment of children and parents themselves. Current evidence is needed to examine the scope and nature of parental distress in childhood ALL. This review focused on associated variables, predictors, and outcomes of parental distress following their ALL diagnosis of their child. PubMed, Web of Science, and PsycINFO databases were searched for English and Spanish papers published from 1983 to 2021. PRISMA statement was followed, and papers were evaluated through a standardized methodological quality assessment tool (NHLBI). Of the 28 papers included, 16 were evaluated as fair, eight as good, and four as poor. Regarding results, 11 papers reported subgroup differences, and 15 found potential predictors of parental distress, including sociodemographic, psychosocial, psychological, family, health, and ALL-specific variables. Significant correlations were found between parental distress, social support, illness cognitions, and resilience, as well as contradictory results regarding the impact of sociodemographic variables on parental distress. Family cohesion and caregiver burden were associated with distress, and the use of healthy coping strategies was associated with less anxiety. Caregiver strain contributed to distress, and the overall impact of illness positively predicted anxiety in mothers and somatization in fathers. Differences in parental distress were found regarding group risk, time since diagnosis, and treatment phases. Thirteen papers explored the outcomes of parental distress on psychological, family, health, and social/education outcomes. Parental distress was the most important predictor of family strain. Significant correlations were found between parental distress at diagnosis and further psychological adjustment of parents themselves and their children. Most papers reported correlations between parental distress on children's adjustment and quality of life, although few studies reported no association. Correlations between maternal depression and child participation in education and social life were also found. Longitudinal studies are needed to better understand parental distress and its consequences on health outcomes, in particular. Future interventions should focus mainly on parents on distress reduction and psychological adjustment, both in parents and children over time.

Keywords : childhood acute lymphoblastic leukemia, family, parental distress, psychological adjustment, quality of life

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