

Beliefs, Attitudes, and Understanding of Childhood Cancer Among White and Latino Parents in the Phoenix Metropolitan Area: A Comparative Study

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Abstract : In 2023, it was expected 350 parents in Arizona would have a child receive a cancer diagnosis (Welcome Arizona Cancer Foundation For Children, n.d.). The news of a child's diagnosis with cancer can be overwhelming and confusing, especially for those lucky enough to lack a personal tie to the disease that takes approximately 1800 children's lives each year in the United States (Deegan et al., n.d.). A parent's beliefs, attitudes, and understandings surrounding cancer are vital for medical staff to provide adequate and culturally competent care for each patient, especially across cultural and ethnic lines in regions housing multicultural populations. Arizona's cultural/linguistic mosaic houses many White and Latino populations and English and Spanish speakers. Variations in insurance coverage, from those insured through public insurance programs (e.g., Medicaid) or private insurance plans (e.g., employee-sponsored insurance) versus those uninsured, also factor into health-seeking attitudes and behaviors. To further understand parental attitudes, understandings, and beliefs towards childhood cancer, 22 parents (11 of Latino ethnicity, 11 of White ethnicity) were interviewed on these facets of childhood cancer, despite 21 of the 22 never having a child receive a cancer diagnosis. The exploration of these perceptions across ethnic lines revealed a higher report of fear-orientated beliefs amongst Latino parents--hypothesized to be rooted in the starkly contrasting lack of belief in the possibility of recovering for children with cancer, compared to their white counterparts who displayed more optimism in the recovery process. Further, this study's results lay the foundation for future scholarship to explore avenues of information dispersal to Latino parents that correct misconceptions of health outcomes and enable earlier intervention to be possible, ultimately correlating to better health and treatment outcomes by increasing parental health literacy rates for childhood cancer in the Phoenix Metropolitan.

Keywords : Childhood Cancer, Parental Beliefs, Parental Attitudes, Parental Understandings, Phoenix Metropolitan, Culturally Competent Care, Health Disparities, Health Inequities

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