

## Changes in the Lives of Families Having a Child with Cancer

**Authors :** Ilknur Kahriman, Hacer Kobya Bulut, Birsal C. Demirbag

**Abstract :** Introduction and Aim: One of the most challenging aspects of being parents of a child diagnosed with cancer is to balance their normal family life with the child's health needs and treatment requirements. Cancer covers an important part of family life and gets ahead of other matters. Families mostly feel that everything has changed in their lives with the cancer diagnosis and are obliged to make a number of adjustments in their lives. Their normal family life suddenly begins to include treatments, hospital appointments and hospitalizations. This study is a descriptive research conducted to determine the changes in the lives of families who had a child with cancer. Methods: This study was carried out with 65 families having children diagnosed with cancer in 0-17 age group at outpatient pediatric oncology clinic and polyclinic of a university hospital in Trabzon. Data were collected through survey method from August to November, 2015. In the analysis of the data, numbers, percentage and chi-square test were used. Findings: It was found out that the average age of mothers was 35.33 years, most of them were primary school graduates (44.6%) and housewives (89.2%) and the average age of fathers was 39.30 years, most of them were high school graduates (29.2%) and self-employed (43.8% ). The majority of their children were boys and their average age was 7.74 years and 77% had Acute lymphocytic leukemia (ALL) diagnosis. 87.5% of the mothers who had a child with cancer had increased fears in their lives, 84.4% had increased workload at home, 82.8% had more stressful life and 82.8% felt themselves physically tired. The mothers indicated that their healthy children could not do the social activities they had used to do before (56.5%), they no longer fed their healthy children with the food they loved eating so that the sick child did not aspire (52.3%) and their healthy children were more furious than before (53.2%). As for the fathers, the fundamental change they had was increased workload at home (82.3%), had more stressful life (80.6%) and could no longer allocate time to the activities they had been interested in and done before (77.8%). There was not a significant difference between the sick children gender and the changes in their parents lives. The communication between the mothers and their healthy children were determined to be positively affected in the families in which the sick child's disease duration was under 12 months ( $X^2 = 6.452$ ,  $p = 0.011$ ). Conclusion: This study showed that parents having a child with cancer had more workload at home, had more stressful lives, could not allocate time to social activities, had increased fears, felt themselves tired and their healthy children became more furious and their social activities reduced.

**Keywords :** child, cancer, changes in lives, family

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