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Mothers' lived experience in caring for children newly diagnosed with acute lymphocytic leukemia

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Acute lymphocytic leukemia (ALL) is the most common childhood cancer. Although advanced cancer treatments have significantly improved the survival rate, parents of such children experience considerable stress when their children are diagnosed with the life-threatening illness, particularly 1 year within the diagnosis. Thus, this Taiwan-based qualitative study explored mothers' caring experiences during 3 months to 1 year after their children were newly diagnosed with ALL. A Heideggerian phenomenological approach was adopted to explore meaning to the mothers caring for their children. Data collection involved semistructured interviews and a hermeneutic analysis was performed. Interviewees were 12 mothers. The interview content elucidated four main themes and eight subthemes: "Difficulty in associating cancer with their healthy child", including seeking but not solving the problem and feeling troubled by the disease symptoms continuous; "Shock and fear after ALL diagnosis", including the shock of having a child with a life-threatening disease and feeling frightened of critical and intensive medical interventions; "The need for time to deal with cancer in their life", including the time to manage the sick child and familial emotions and conflicts and to accept and conduct the cancer care activities; and "Fighting for the child's life", including following health professionals' recommendations and prioritizing the sick child and related treatments. The mothers were completely shocked when their children were diagnosed with ALL; however, they calmly followed the physician's treatment protocol and changed their jobs to care for their children during this critical period to ensure their children's life safety.

Biography

Yu-Ping Huang has completed her PhD from Griffith University School of Nursing and Midwifery. She is an Associated Professor and teaches at National Quemoy University School of Nursing. She has published more than 20 papers in reputed journals and has been serving as a reviewer for international and national journals.

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