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Roles of health professionals during hematopoietic stem cell transplantation in children with Cancer

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Hematopoietic stem cell transplantation (HSCT) is the preferred treatment over chemotherapy and radiotherapy for children with recurrent cancers. However, HSCT has adverse side effects such as infection, sepsis and graft-versus-host disease. Hence, HSCT is performed in isolation wards; this can cause immersive stress in the treated children and their primary caregivers. Thus, a phenomenological study was conducted using semi-structured interviews to explore the roles and functions of health professionals from the perspectives of mothers who took care of their children with cancer in isolation rooms during HSCT. The time between HSCT preparation and leaving the isolation room after HSCT completion was considered the HSCT period. This study recruited 34- to 54-year-old mothers (n=12) of children aged 11 months to 14 years. The results revealed that the roles and functions of health professionals were as follows: (1) trainer, teaching mothers the necessary skills and knowledge to take care of their children in isolation rooms; (2) supporter, listening and offering encouragement to the mothers and providing them with emotional support; (3) experience guide, sharing with the mothers their experiences of certain symptoms in their children during HSCT; (4) companion, undergoing the entire process with the mothers to provide a sense of security; (5) eyewitness, witnessing and understanding the meanings of HSCT and the mothers' involvement; (6) monitor and detector, identifying early signs or symptoms of HSCT complications; and (7) care provider, administering drugs and providing care. The mothers' anxiety and distress were reduced when they encountered caring and supportive health professionals.

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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