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A cross-sectional study to identify the informational and care needs of parents of children with cancer in Turkey

Ayse Ay

Hacettepe University Faculty of Nursing Child Health and Disease Nursing, Turkey

Aim: The aim of this study was to determine the perceived needs of parents of children with cancer in Turkey.

Background: Determining the needs of parents of children with cancer has been an important issue in the care of children with cancer and their families. Determination of the needs of these parents would provide significant data for services to be planned for these parents.

Design: Cross-sectional design

Methods: A self-administered questionnaire was completed by 180 parents whose children (0-18 years old) were diagnosed with leukemia, solid tumors, and central nervous system tumors.

Results: The needs of the parents were determined as providing explanations to them in comprehensible language (100%), being informed about changes occurring in their child's condition, and being aware of when and why the treatment plan of the child changes. Additionally, the needs to know how to cope with the feelings of their other children (76%), to know how to inform their other children in a manner appropriate for their ages (77%), and to know what information to share with their other children that is appropriate for their ages (77%) were specified by parents as being less important. Only the number of children among socio-demographic and disease-related variables believed to influence the need for information was observed to affect this need.

Conclusions: Parents of children with cancer currently experience unmet needs related to receiving clear information and being informed of changes in their child's condition and treatment plan. It is incumbent upon nurses to facilitate these aspects of care in collaboration with the multidisciplinary team.

Key words: parents, pediatric cancers, met and unmet needs

ayse0526@gmail.com