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The lived experiences of aboriginal adolescent survivors of childhood cancer during the recovering process in Taiwan

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Purpose: The purpose of this study was to understand the lived experiences of Taiwanese aboriginal adolescent survivors of childhood cancer in the recovering process.

Method: Snowball sampling strategy was used to recruit participants from the pediatrics unit of a medical center in the east region of Taiwan. In-depth interviews were conducted to 11 aboriginal adolescent childhood cancer survivors. The data were analyzed using content analysis.

Results: The results revealed three major themes with sub-themes under each theme. The three major themes are: roots of resilience, transformation and growth, and impact of traditional tribal rituals on resilience. The three sub-themes under “roots of resilience” include: “feeling secured from family accompany, care and financial support”, “received support from the significant ones and religion” and “learned self-adjustment”. The three sub-themes revealed under “transformation and growth” are: “restructure the relationship with peers”, “appreciate parents’ hard-work”, and “learned to seize the moment”. The two sub-themes found under “impact of traditional tribal rituals on resilience” include: “feel blessed by the power of ancestral spirits and clansmen”, and “strengthened ethnic identity”.

Conclusion: This study provided insight into the experiences of aboriginal adolescents as they recovered from childhood cancer. The experiences made positive impacts by inspiring growth in maturity and consolidating the aboriginal ethnic identity. The adolescents were empowered by the support from family, friends and clansmen, and their participation in the aboriginal rituals. As healthcare professionals care for the aboriginal adolescents, it is critical to consider these culturally and ethnically specific knowledge/experience of surviving cancer to improve quality of care

Biography

Cheng, Yachun is completed her Master's degree at the age of 36 years from National Taipei University of Nursing and Health Sciences of Pediatric Nursing. She is headnurse of Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital.

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