B1-1: The Meaning of Adolescents' Eating Experiences during Bone Marrow Transplant Recovery

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Abstract:
Introduction: High dose chemotherapy and total body irradiation required before bone marrow transplantation (BMT) can cause multiple and severe gastrointestinal (GI) side effects that often lead to poor oral intake. The GI symptoms and interventions to improve nutrition during BMT hospitalization have been well identified; however, there is limited information of ongoing issues beyond the hospitalization. Symptom experiences and management strategies need long term investigation. This study allowed adolescents an opportunity to share eating experiences in their own words throughout BMT recovery. The research questions included: 1. What meaning do adolescents ascribe to their eating experiences during the first 100 days post BMT? 2. What strategies do adolescents use to facilitate their eating experiences? 3. What impact do eating experiences have on adolescents’ quality of life during the first 100 days post BMT?

Method(s): This study used an interpretive phenomenological design, guided by Martin Heidegger’s philosophical underpinnings. Information was obtained from individual interviews with 13 adolescents using a purposeful sampling method. Limitations of the study included single institution sampling and interviewing only adolescents, not caregivers. Data were analyzed using the hermeneutic method, and rigor of the study was supported by establishing credibility, dependability, and confirmability.

Results: Five themes were derived from the interviews. Adolescents discussed a slow return of eating: “It Just Takes Awhile”, barriers that affected their eating: “Every Time I Eat, Something Goes Wrong”, personal eating strategies: “Working Your Way Up”, a return to normalization: “Getting Back to Normal”, and supportive advice to others: “Just Don’t Worry”.

Discussion & Conclusions: Nurses need to have an awareness of eating issues throughout BMT recovery. Eating strategies and the fact that eating provided a return of normalization should be shared with other BMT patients to provide encouragement during recovery. With information from this study, nurses can educate future patients about potential eating issues and recommend eating strategies that will allow patients to make effective choices to enhance their eating.
Abstract History:
This abstract has been presented or accepted for presentation in whole or in part at the SNRS or other scientific meeting.
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