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Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Families with a Child in Cancer Treatment

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Introduction

- The COVID-19 pandemic may have a unique impact on families of children undergoing treatment for cancer, given ongoing demands of treatment and concerns for children’s immunocompromised status.
- Exposure and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on children with cancer and their families is not yet known.

This is an exploratory investigation of COVID-19 exposure and impact among a sample of families with a child in cancer treatment.

Participants: N=47 primary caregivers of a child diagnosed with cancer and receiving active treatment.

Measures:

COVID-19 Exposure and Impact
- Surveys completed between 07/21/2020 and 01/20/2021.
- CEFIS Subscale: 0-20 - 0-100
- PAT2.0: 0-20 - 0-100
- CPTS: 0-20 - 0-100
- PPPHM: 0-100

Demographics and Psychosocial Distress
- Psychosocial Assessment Tool 2.0 (PAT2.0; Pai, et al.,2008).
- Total Scores map onto Pediatric Psychosocial Preventative Health Model (PPPHM; Kazak, 2006)

Analyses:
- Pearson Correlations
- One-Way ANOVA

Method

- Children’s Mercy Kansas City; Other hospital if applicable

Goals:
- Examining COVID-19 exposure and impact in comparison samples of families with healthy children is a next step in exploring the differential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on families of children with chronic illnesses.

Results

- Child Characteristics
- Descriptives & Pearson Correlations
- COVID-19 and Time
- COVID-19 and Psychosocial Distress

Discussion

- Families of children with cancer reported increasing COVID-19 exposure throughout the pandemic.
- COVID-19 exposure was not related to COVID-19 impact in this sample. Given the high risk for infection during treatments (Lighter-Fisher, et al., 2016), we speculate that families of children with cancer may already engage in many infection control measures that were mandated during the COVID-19 pandemic, thus mitigating the impact of COVID-19 exposure.
- Family psychosocial distress was correlated with COVID-19 exposure, but the cross-sectional nature of the study precludes causal interpretation.

Future Directions

- Examining COVID-19 exposure and impact in comparison samples of families with healthy children is a next step in exploring the differential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on families of children with chronic illnesses.

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