

CLAHRC BITE

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A bite-sized summary of a piece of **CLAHRC** research



There is a significant risk of psychopathology yet few receive any formal psychological assessment or treatment.

Who?

Teenage and young adults with cancer.

What?

Teenage and young adult cancer patients experience a wide range of physical, psychological and social effects as a result of a diagnosis of cancer.

The research...

A pilot study to gain a picture of the experience of teenagers and young adults from pre-diagnosis to post-treatment.

Findings...

Despite current policy guidelines, there seems to be considerable unmet need for this group.



Background

Teenage and young adults who have had a diagnosis of cancer experience a wide range of physical, psychological and social effects arising from their diagnosis, and have to adjust to many changes, including learning to live with uncertainty. These effects have the potential to add considerably to the difficulties of the transition from adolescence to adulthood, a developmental phase already carrying with it an enhanced vulnerability to mental illness.

Aim of the study

The principle aim of the pilot study was to assess the feasibility of conducting a wider multi-centre study, and in so doing, to gather data describing the experience of teenagers and young adults from the period before a diagnosis of cancer, to the post-treatment period.

Findings

Problems highlighted by the young patients and their parents described the extent to which the services had been able to identify and meet their needs for psychological help.

Key points

- Older age was associated with elevated risk of psychopathology.
- It is important to identify psychological needs at all stages of the illness, with the post-treatment phase a particularly vulnerable time.
- Empathy, compassion and good communication are essential among clinical and therapeutic staff.
- There is an urgent need to improve the speed of diagnosis and referral.

References

Lack, C; Goodyer, I; Hatcher, H (2012) Teenage and Young Adult Cancer Study: A pilot study to assess feasibility of developing a multicentre study using mixed methodologies. (unpublished, available from: clahrcoffice@cptf.nhs.uk)

An explanation of CLAHRC CP and its role

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Collaboration for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care (CLAHRC CP) is a partnership between the University of Cambridge, NHS organisations in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, and Cambridgeshire County Council.

Funded by the National Institute for Health Research, our mission is to undertake high quality applied research to improve health and social care across the East of England.

This bite-sized summary of CLAHRC research is one of a series aimed at fostering collaboration between the academic and service delivery health sectors for the benefit of the health of the population.

Our website

www.clahrc-cp.nihr.ac.uk

Useful link

<http://dev.psychiatry.cam.ac.uk/>

This is a summary of independent research commissioned by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR).

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