



Communication skills training for healthcare professionals in pediatric hematology-oncology: Mini-review

Pediyatrik hematoloji-onkoloji alanında alıřan saęlık bakım profesyonelleri iin iletiřim becerileri eęitimi: Mini-derleme

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ABSTRACT

Beyond meeting the children's physical care needs, they deserve supportive communication appropriate to the psychosocial needs of the child and family. Many pediatric hematology oncology patients are anxious, worried, or feel uncertain about their future. Such stressors can have long-lasting effects on patients' quality of life and well-being. Communication during hospitalization could play an important role in determining pediatric hematology oncology patients' concerns. Communication skills training is multidimensional and should be considered as a whole. For this reason, the trainings should be prepared to improve the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of the participants. The purpose of this review is to explain the importance of communication skills training for healthcare professionals working in the field of pediatric hematology/oncology.

Keywords: Communication skills; healthcare professionals; pediatrics; hematology/oncology

ÖZET

Çocuklar fiziksel bakım ihtiyalarının karřılamannın ötesinde, ocuęun ve ailenin psikososyal ihtiyalarına uygun destekleyici iletiřimi hak ederler. Pek ok pediyatrik hematoloji onkoloji hastası endiřeli ve gelecekleri hakkında belirsiz hissedebilir. Bu tür stres faktörlerinin, hastaların yařam kalitesi ve refahı üzerinde uzun süreli etkileri olabilir. Hastanede yatıř sürecinde iletiřim, pediyatrik hematoloji onkoloji hastalarının endiřelerini belirlemede önemli bir rol oynayabilir. İletiřim becerileri eęitimi ok boyutludur ve bir bütün olarak ele alınmalıdır. Bu nedenle eęitimler, katılımcıların bilgi, beceri ve tutumlarını geliřtirmeye yönelik hazırlanmalıdır. Bu derlemenin amacı pediyatrik hematoloji/onkoloji alanında alıřan saęlık profesyonelleri iin iletiřim becerileri eęitiminin önemini aıklamaktır.

Anahtar kelimeler: İletiřim becerileri; saęlık bakım profesyonelleri; pediyatri; hematoloji/onkoloji

Introduction

Followed up with the diagnosis of lung cancer, K.S. expressed the importance of communication in the last months of his life as follows: "Quietly humane behaviors seemed more healing to me than the high-dose chemotherapy and radiation I received in hopes of recovery. While I don't believe that hope and consolation alone can beat cancer, this type of behavior was absolutely important to me."

It is essential to have adequate communication skills for healthcare professionals working in pediatric hematology-oncology. It starts with their awareness that children and their families have different and even extraordinary experiences in the treatment process. Awareness can raise the level of awareness for caregivers and care recipients. The caregiver's ability to evaluate the patient as a whole is an important feature that affects communication skills. In conjunction with this, high interaction in terms of harmony and communication between children and their parents and healthcare professionals can positively affect the treatment process.

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The purpose of this review is to explain the importance of communication skills training for healthcare professionals working in the field of pediatric hematology/oncology.

Beyond meeting the children's physical care needs, they deserve supportive communication appropriate to the psychosocial needs of the child and family (Barth & Lannen, 2011). Many pediatric hematology oncology patients are anxious, worried, or feel uncertain about their future. Such stressors can have long-lasting effects on patients' quality of life and well-being (van Beusekom, Cameron, Bedi, Banks & Humphris, 2019).

Communication during hospitalization could play an important role in determining pediatric hematology oncology patients' concerns. Effective communication is critical to the successful delivery of healthcare services and an essential part of the patient- and family-centered care focus in pediatric hematology oncology (Banerjee et al., 2017). Ineffective communication has damaging effects on children and families and may increase their levels of uncertainty, anxiety, and dissatisfaction with care (Jenerette & Mayer, 2016). However, qualified communication between patients and healthcare professionals can produce important patient care outcomes: enhanced disease understanding, more accurate symptom disclosure, high adherence to the treatment process, decreased anxiety and psychological distress, empowered patients, and improved satisfaction in care settings (Mata et al., 2021).

Communication behaviors include using open-ended questions, eliciting children and their family perspectives, checking for understanding, avoiding so-called blocking behaviors, and ensuring that communication skills cover knowledge and attitudes. Communication can be therapeutic defined as the process of using verbal and nonverbal communication to connect with children and their families. Therapeutic communication is holistic and patient-centered, and involves aspects of the physiological, psychological, environmental, and spiritual care of the patient (Feraco et al., 2016).

Healthcare professionals' ability to recognize patient distress cues and allow patients to disclose their emotional distress is an important aspect of therapeutic communication. Additionally, self-awareness, self-efficacy, and learning about communication skills may have benefits for health professionals, prevent burnout, and improve satisfaction (Park et al., 2018; Moore, Rivera, Bravo-Soto, Olivares & Lawrie, 2018; Peterson, Morgan & Calhoun, 2020). Currently, awareness of the importance of communication skills training in pediatric hemato-oncological care has been increasing (Kaye, Cannone, Snaman, Baker, Spraker-Perlman, 2020). There are quasi-experimental and pilot studies on this subject in the literature. Communication skills training was organized by institutions for professionals in pediatrics. The intervention delivery methods used in these training may differ in studies. Training can be in the form of didactic presentation, demonstration videos, small group interaction, case discussions, scenario-based-role play, games, creative drama techniques, and simulation-based practice (Banerjee et al., 2017; Peterson et al., 2020).

Communication skills training is multidimensional and should be considered as a whole. For this reason, the trainings should be prepared to improve the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of the participants. The results of qualitative research, in which clinicians share their experiences, should be used in the creation of educational content. Objectively evaluating the effectiveness of the training or the development of the participants can also be beneficial when creating the content of the planned trainings. Comskil trainings are continuous and dynamic processes. Hospitals should constantly renew their comskil training and training content in line with the needs and experiences of employees/clinicians.

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