

Needs of Siblings of Childhood, Adolescent, and Young Adult (CAYA) Cancer Survivors and the Association with Psychosocial Functioning

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Introduction

- Siblings of childhood, adolescent, and young adult cancer survivors (CAYA) are at risk of suboptimal psychological functioning, such as symptoms of post-traumatic stress (PTSS), depression, and anxiety. ^{1,2}
- Siblings who have higher cancer-related unmet needs also have higher psychological distress. ³
- Addressing siblings' unmet needs is consistent with the Psychosocial Standard of Care ⁴, but how CAYA siblings' unmet needs are related to psychosocial functioning is unclear.
- This study explored the unmet needs of siblings of CAYA cancer survivors and their relationship to psychosocial functioning.

Method

- CAYA cancer survivors who were at least 12+ months off treatment and were treated at Rutgers Cancer Institute referred their adolescent and adult siblings to participate. Recruitment is ongoing.
- Siblings completed an online survey through Qualtrics. Measures included:
 - Sibling Cancer Needs Instrument (SCNI): Measured unmet informational, practical, and relationship needs ⁵
 - Posttraumatic Stress Checklist ⁶
 - Fear of Cancer Recurrence Inventory (FCRI) ⁷
 - PROMIS-29+2 v2.1: Measured depression and anxiety ⁸
 - PROMIS Family Relationships Short Form: Measured family functioning ⁹
 - Demographics
- Statistical analyses were conducted in SPSS. Data were analyzed using one-way ANOVAs and bivariate correlations.

Results

- Siblings (n = 35) reported a high level of total unmet needs.
 - Possible range: 45 – 180
 - Sample: $M = 78.53$, $SD = 33.47$, $\alpha = .942$
- Less financially secure siblings reported greater information needs ($p = .014$), practical needs ($p = .039$), and total needs ($p = .040$).
- More unmet needs were associated with higher levels of: (1) PTSS, (2) Fear of cancer recurrence, and (3) Depressive symptoms.
- More unmet needs were associated with lower levels of family functioning.
- Greater unmet practical needs were related to worse memory and concentration ($r = -.572$, $p < .001$).

Table 1

Sample Demographics

	n	%
Age M (SD) (Range: 17 – 63)	26.89	9.0
Gender		
Female	23	65.7
Male	12	34.3
Ethnicity		
Non-Hispanic	31	88.6
Hispanic	4	11.4
Race		
White	30	85.7
Non-White	5	14.3
Financial Situation		
High	24	68.6
Low	10	28.6

Table 2

Bivariate Correlations

Outcome	Total Unmet Needs
PTSS	$r = .658$, $p < .001$
Fear of recurrence	$r = .486$, $p = .004$
Depression	$r = .403$, $p = .020$
Family functioning	$r = -.440$, $p = .010$

Conclusion

- Siblings' unmet needs are associated with poorer psychosocial functioning.
- Limitations include the small sample size, large age range of siblings, and ongoing data collection.
- Assessing siblings' unmet needs and integrating psychosocial support for siblings could reduce distress and improve overall well-being.

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