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Introduction

Cancer is increasingly recognized as a significant health issue among adolescents and young adults (AYAs), typically defined as individuals aged 15 to 39 years. While advancements in cancer treatment have led to improved survival rates, the psychological impact of a cancer diagnosis and treatment on this population remains a critical concern. AYA cancer survivors are at a heightened risk for mental health disorders, including anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Factors such as the timing of diagnosis, developmental stage, social support, and treatment-related factors play pivotal roles in shaping their psychological outcomes. This article aims to explore the psychological outcomes of AYA cancer survivors, presenting current research findings and implications for practice [1].

Description

Psychological impact of cancer

The cancer experience can disrupt normal developmental trajectories, leading to feelings of isolation, uncertainty about the future, and concerns about body image and identity. Studies indicate that AYA cancer survivors report higher levels of psychological distress compared to their peers without a history of cancer. Common psychological outcomes include:

Anxiety disorders: AYA cancer survivors are particularly susceptible to anxiety disorders, with prevalence rates ranging from 20% to 40%. Fear of recurrence, treatment side effects, and the long-term implications of their illness contribute to heightened anxiety levels [2].

Depression: Research indicates that depression is prevalent among AYA cancer survivors, with rates reported between 15% and 30%. Symptoms may manifest as persistent sadness, loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities, and difficulty in coping with daily life.

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD): The traumatic nature of

Depression

29% exhibited signs of major depressive disorder.

PTSD

21% of survivors met the criteria for PTSD.

Quality of Life

Many survivors reported lower quality of life scores, with significant negative correlations between mental health status and quality of life indicators.

Furthermore, interventions aimed at improving psychological outcomes, such as Cognitive-Behavioral therapy (CBT) and mindfulness-based stress reduction, have shown promise in reducing anxiety and depression among AYA cancer survivors [6].

Discussion

Findings of this review emphasize the urgent need for mental health support tailored to the unique challenges faced by AYA cancer survivors. The high prevalence of anxiety, depression, and PTSD underscores the importance of screening and early intervention strategies in clinical settings. Integrating psychological support into cancer care can significantly enhance the overall well-being of AYA survivors. Healthcare providers should consider implementing routine mental health assessments and creating comprehensive care plans that address both physical and psychological needs. Additionally, peer support programs and survivor networks can foster a sense of community and reduce feelings of isolation. Moreover, awareness campaigns targeting families, educators, and healthcare professionals can help destigmatize mental health issues and encourage survivors to seek help when needed [7-10].

Conclusion