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Nurse's main challenges in caring for parents and young children with cancer during the child's entire cancer trajectory



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Having childhood cancer involves repeated hospitalizations, a change in the child's and family's everyday life and routines. Concrete how the nurse can act when caring for children with cancer in various phases is sparsely highlighted in the literature. Therefore, this study aims to describe nurse's main challenges in caring for young children with cancer and their parents during the diagnosis, on-treatment, off-treatment and follow-up phase. Thirteen (13) children with newly diagnosed cancer aged 1 to 6 years and their parents connected to a pediatric oncology unit in Southern Sweden, participated in this study through semi-structured interviews. Child and parent data were analyzed with a deductive content analysis using the Swanson caring theory. The result of this study shows that nurse's main challenges in caring for young children with cancer and their parents are to some extent but mainly different between the phases. The nurse's main challenges in caring for young children with cancer and their parents during the cancer trajectory are to help children and families in the transition to a new normality, create hope by a trustful relationship, support coping by giving knowledge and information, decrease distress, anxiety and pain, display interests in the child's and parent's life outside the hospital and to have a plan for follow-up. From these results, it would be recommended for nurses to develop a standardized and structured nursing care plan or clinical guidelines with detailed information on how to carry out the clinical nursing care in the different phases.

Biography

Karin Enskar is a Pediatric Nurse with a PhD degree, working as a Professor of Nursing at the School of Health and Welfare at Jonkoping University, Sweden. Her research is focused on nursing care of children and adolescents with cancer and their families, as well on children with other long-term diseases, including pain and pain management. She has published more than 90 papers in reputed journals and has been serving as an expert on several boards of repute.

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