Life Interrupted: Young people and their family/significant other living with malignant melanoma: an interpretive phenomenological analysis

Conference or Workshop Item

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Malignant Melanoma
A Global Concern

Worldwide malignant melanoma is a cancer that has steadily increased over the past 50 years. It is predominately seen in fair skinned populations.

The Research Study
Methodology - A qualitative Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

IPA consists of three central tenets - phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography (Smith et al., 2009).

Five young people were purposively sampled from three National Health Service Boards (16 to 26 years) based on where they were receiving treatment. Four male and one female. Two mothers, two fathers and one partner. Stages 2A to 3B.

Ethical approval through Higher Education Institution & NHS Health Boards. Each young person and a nominated family member/significant other were interviewed (n=10) either individually (n=4) or as a dyad (n=6).

The Research Study
Data Analysis

Utilised a systematic approach, analysed using an inductive interpretative approach following the seven-step approach recommended by Smith et al. (2009).

Each transcript was analysed separately both for the YP and then the family/significant other, whether as an individual or dyad.

Findings
Life Interrupted

The metanarrative of a 'Life Interrupted' was the core conceptual thread woven throughout the findings. It represents the interconnections and interrelationships between the four super-ordinate themes:
1. "Is it Serious?"
2. "Too Much too Young"
3. "Not the Same"
4. "Time to Live"

Malignant Melanoma
The Experiential Dynamic

1. Pre-diagnosis: Bewilderment & Surprise. Is it Serious?
2. Diagnosis: Life on Hold. Too Much too Young.

Malignant Melanoma
Conclusions

The family/significant other played a critical role in the young person's MM journey.

Symptoms were not always present, and diagnosis was challenging to confirm.

Participants did not always have access to the 'cancer specialist services', and experienced fragmented services and insufficient emotional and social support resulting in poorer experiences of living with this disease.

No literature around experiences of young people with Malignant Melanoma.

References:

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Although it is more often diagnosed in older people, it is increasingly affecting younger people. In the United Kingdom it is the fifth most common cancer among young people.

In Scotland MM is the third most common cancer, with 14 young people diagnosed with the disease each year, more common in female than male.

The sustained upward global trend in the incidence of MM highlights the timeliness and importance of understanding the needs and experiences of this unique population.