



Relationship Between Psychological Distress and Death Attitude in Children with Leukemia

Samaneh Fallah Karimi^{1*}, Zahra Khalilzadeh Farsangi¹,
Leyla Mohammadifard², Fatihe Kerman Saravi¹

¹Student Research Committee, Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery,
University of Medical Sciences, Zahedan, Medical Sciences, Zahedan, Iran

²Leyla MohammadifardLeyla Mohammadifard

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*Corresponding Author:

Student Research Committee,
Faculty of Nursing and
Midwifery, University of
Medical Sciences, Zahedan,
Medical Sciences, Zahedan, Iran

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Psychological factors play a crucial part in both the progression and the persistence as well as the results of cancer. Attitude toward death and psychological distress are some of these factors. This study aimed to determine the relationship between psychological distress and death attitude in children with leukemia.

Search Strategy: This descriptive-correlational study was conducted between April and June 2023. The sample was comprised of 100 children with leukemia who were hospitalized in the hematology unit at Imam Ali Hospital in Zahedan, Iran. The sample was selected using convenience and purposive sampling methods. Data collection tools included demographics, the Wong Death Attitude Inventory, and the Kessler Psychological Distress questionnaire. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 24, encompassing chi-square tests, one-way analysis of variance, and Spearman's correlation coefficient.

Results: The results showed a significant direct relationship between the total psychological distress score and the total score of attitude towards death ($r_s = 0.104$; $p = 0.05$). The results also indicated that the subscales related to attitudes toward death—Fear of Death, Death Avoidance, and Escape Acceptance—as leukemia are significantly elevated.

Conclusion and Discussion: Our findings exhibited a direct relationship between psychological distress and negative aspects of death attitude, in such a way that the average score of the dimensions of negative attitude towards death, including fear and avoidance of death, was higher in adolescent who had a higher psychological distress score. This issue shows the importance of paying more attention to the dimension of psychological distress in children patients with leukemia hospitalized in the hematology unit and its role in increasing the negative dimensions of the attitude towards death.

Keywords: Child, Distress, Leukemia, Nursing