

Abstract

“Exploring the Experience and Psychological Adjustment of the Mothers of Cancer Patient Children in Palestine”

Cancer is a frightening concept in our Palestinian culture, especially for children with cancer, and their families. In most cases, the main caregivers for these children are the mothers, and as a result there is a heavy burden on them as they deal with all the stressful experience of diagnoses, negative attitudes from the society, and lack of social support. My research focuses on the mothers and the experience of caring for their cancer patient children. There is dearth of research about the experience of mothers of cancer patient children, and the few studies available employ mostly quantitative research methods. I conducted in depth qualitative interviews with Palestinian mothers who are the main caregiver for their cancer patient children. My inquiry focuses on their construction of the experience and the psychological support they need as they struggle with a wide variety of stressful issues surrounding the illness of their child.

The results are presented in four main themes which are: The impact of a child with cancer to mothers and family dynamics, the most important sources of support for mothers of cancer patients children, the role of religion and culture to accommodate the infection of a child with cancer, and finally the role of the formal institutional support by the hospital to these mothers.