INTERNET: THE SOURCE OF INFORMATION FOR PARENTS WITH CHILDREN WHO HAVE CANCER

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Aim

Cancer is a life-threatening chronic disease. Parents whose child is a cancer patient have to cope with this feeling of being threatened. Parents are in search within the coping process(1). The internet has been an area that has been an instrument for their seeking of support in recent years. The search for information on the internet of parents whose child is a cancer patient was examined in this study.

Methodology

Netnographic method(2) was used in this study. The search for information via the internet of the parents whose child is a cancer patient was examined at the limited date ranges. Cancer-related issues were evaluated on two share blogs where parents have intensely searched for information on the internet.

Results

The topics shared by parents whose child is a cancer patient were collected in seven groups; 1. Diagnosis, 2. Treatment, 3. Side-effects of the treatment, 4. Infection, 5. Lifespan, 6. Death, 7. Nonpharmacological methods which are used (figure 1). It was found that mothers have asked more questions and shared more information than fathers on the blogs. Moreover, most of the working mothers left their jobs due to the need for care of their children with cancer and others took time off from their works. Mothers used emotional expressions while writing their experiences and addressing to other parents in similar situations. The fact that there are expressions of supporting each other with heart and soul on the blog posts is a finding that they meet on the common ground. Particularly, the complications they encountered after the treatment process was initiated and what can be done have been explained in detail to the new members seeking information. Many of these are part of the medical process. Parents shared the results of treatment and approached each other with promising sentences.

Discussion

Camerini et al.(2010) have stated that seeking information and support through using social media on the internet plays an important role in serving to individuals and the society in their study. Parents used social media to seek information and support related to the disease of their children with cancer in this study(3). Sebelefsky et al.(2016) have remarked parents' seek for information via internet in case of their children's disease in their study. Parents' blog posts supporting each other have been promising and encouraging within the difficult process of cancer treatment(4). Loane et al.(2013), Argan et al.(2016) have stated that support provided by online forum members to each other has positive effects on the quality of life. It was seen that parents have similarly made positive sentences where they have supported each other and they have been positively influenced by each other in this study(5,6). As a result, parents whose children are in the process of cancer treatment seek support as well as information. The internet environment has shown that it is a significant tool in the seeking process. It can be recommended that there are structured blogs/shares with the potential of providing more effective support on the internet for this purpose.

Figure1:sub-categories which sharing parents post

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