



The Effects of Cancer on Adolescents and Young Adults

Camila MunifaTelles*

Department of Psychology, Positivo University, Paraná, Brazil

*Corresponding author: Camila MunifaTelles, Department of Psychology, Positivo University, Paraná, Brazil, Email: camimarochoi18@gmail.com

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Description

To map, organize and analyze the articles published in the last five years about AYAs with cancer. CAPES database and Google Scholar were searched to identify relevant studies from 2015 to February 2020. Eligible articles included empirical or theoretical research, quantitative and/or qualitative studies, targeted AYAs with cancer, addressed different topics related to AYAs such as unmet needs, hospital challenges, interventions or tools based on evidence, as well as political and socioeconomic aspects. Of the 161 articles analyzed, 74 (46%) discussed the health system, including hospital dynamics, treatment and interventions during treatment; 63 (39.1%) discussed aspects or interventions that influence the quality of life and mental health of AYAs with cancer; 14 (8.7%) discussed issues related to sexual health; and 10 (6.2%) addressed social, economic and demographic problems of AYAs with cancer.

Three types of purposes have been identified in the articles: 118 (73.3%) investigated variables in areas related to AYAs with cancer, aiming to increase the understanding of the phenomenon and the needs of AYAs; 18 (11.2%) intervened on the needs of AYAs with cancer through pilot studies or evidence-based interventions; and 22 (13.7%) aimed to evaluate an intervention previously performed or to evaluate an intervention based on evidence. There is still much to be researched within the last two categories. In the last three years, these categories have been growing gradually and on a small scale.

The scarcity of support, service and research personalized to the health of adolescents and young adults (AYAs) with cancer or survivors is evident. In recent years, even with advances of health and science professionals in the awareness of the importance of looking at this audience and developing specific interventions for them, there are still many gaps to be filled. Due to the diversity of these gaps, filling them effectively may become even more difficult for professionals and researchers in the area. This article aims to map, organize and analyze the articles published in the last five years on AYAs with cancer and survivors. An overview that considered the extension of the field was prioritized, instead of focusing on a specific theme studied in it.

Literature Search Strategy

The scoping review was carried out in February 2020. Combinations of the terms "Adolescent and young adults" or "AYAs with cancer" with "main needs" and "cancer" with "Adolescent and young adults" or "AYAs main needs" were used in the journals of the

Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior (CAPES) and Google Scholar. The search was limited only to peer-reviewed articles, in either English or Portuguese.

Screen and Selection Criteria

Initially, 442 articles were screened by their title and abstract. The author evaluated 270 articles to decide which of them would be eligible for analysis. For this purpose, the following criteria were established: studies targeting only AYAs with cancer or survivors; being published between 2015 and 2020; being either in English or Portuguese; being an empirical or theoretical research, quantitative and/or qualitative; addressing different topics related to AYAs, such as unmet needs, AYAs challenges, hospital challenges, interventions or tools based on evidence, as well as political and socioeconomic aspects of this population. This review was conducted by one person, without blinded evaluation.

Case studies, theses, dissertations, narrative literature reviews, reports, book chapters, books, summaries or testing of protocols and articles describing non-evidence based interventions or tools were excluded. Additionally, in order to analyze reliable data, only peer-reviewed researches that had been published in relevant Journals or magazines in the area were included.

As presented above, 474 articles were identified. Out of these, 204 articles were excluded for being a duplicate or having titles and abstracts that did not meet the including criteria. Out of the 270 remaining articles, 109 were still ineligible under the exclusion criteria. Finally, 161 articles were included and analyzed in their entirety. Appendices A and B show the characteristics of the included studies divided in theoretical and empirical, respectively.

The data was extracted in two stages. The first stage consisted of identifying the following aspects of the articles included: a) research theme, b) research purpose, c) study type, d) study design, e) focused population and f) country. By compiling the data from these aspects in Excel spreadsheets, it was possible to quantify how many researches focused on different themes, purposes, study types and designs, population (AYAs, family of AYAs, caregivers, etc. and, also, to quantify the amount produced per country in this scientific area.

Despite the substantial number of objective data collected in the first stage described above, the second stage needed a thorough sentence interpretation. As this review raised questions about the purposes of the researches, the author directly approached each of their purpose sentences, aiming to identify any kind of pattern. By analyzing those sentences, it was possible to identify three different purpose patterns described in the discussion, since they are more interpretative than objective results. Appendices A and B show the sentences that were analyzed and the pattern in which they fit in.

Conclusions

The present research had as its main objective to map, organize and evaluate the scientific articles that were published from 2015 to 2020 and researched, through different perspectives, the wide demands and needs of adolescents and young adults with cancer. Through the full analysis of the articles, Question 1 was answered and three patterns in their purposes were identified, allowing the categorization of the articles into "Awareness", "Action" and "Post-Action Evaluation".

Question 2 was answered in a quantitative way. As presented, it is concluded that there is still much to be researched within the "Action" and "Post-Action Evaluation" categories. In the last three years, these categories have been growing gradually, even if on a small scale.