Factors Predicting Adaptive Behaviors in Siblings of Children with Cancer

Wipawee Ponkaew, RN, MNS¹, Wanida Sanasuttipun, RN, PhD²

Abstract

Purpose: This study aimed to examine the predictors of adaptive behaviors in sibling of children with cancer, including cancer severity, gender, birth order, social support and parental stress.

Design: Correlational predictive design.

Method: The study sample consisted of 92 pairs of children and their parents. These children aged 9-18 years old had siblings with cancer admitted at Maharat Nakhon Ratchasima Hospital. The subjects were selected by convenience sampling. Data were collected using 5 questionnaires asking about demographic data, perception of cancer severity, social support, parental stress, and adaptive behaviors of the siblings. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis.

Main findings: Social support was the only factor found to be significantly correlated with siblings’ adaptive behaviors (r = .21, p < .05). Research findings revealed that cancer severity (β = -.16, p = .130), gender (β = .06, p = .532), birth order (β = -.09, p = .388), social support (β = .20, p = .058) and parental stress (β = -.06, p = .536) could not predict adaptive behaviors in siblings of children with cancer.

Conclusion and recommendations: Nurses should develop a nursing intervention for siblings of children with cancer. The intervention should include the provision of information, instrumental, and emotional support as well as the enhancement of siblings’ positive self-appraisal.

Keywords: adaptive behavior, children with cancer, siblings, social support