



## A Study to Assess the Problems and Problem Solving Strategy of Mothers of Children with Cancer in Selected Hospitals At Mangalore – Pilot Study

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### ABSTRACT

*Cancer is in a group of more than 200 diseases characterized by uncontrolled and unregulated growth of cells. According to ICMR, a decade back, childhood cancers were 2.5% of the total number of cancer cases. Today, they add up to 5.5%. Researchers have suggested that the caregivers of cancer patient were at risk of developing a variety of psychological and physical problems, including anxiety, depression, fatigue, reduced self esteem and somatic health problems. An explorative study design used to conduct the study. Rating scale is used to assess the problems and semi structured interview is used to identify the problem solving strategy of mothers of children with cancer. There was no significant association found with selected baseline variable. Most of mothers of cancer children suffered from physical problems followed by psychological problems, and highest percentage of them used problem solving strategies.*

**KEYWORDS :** problems, problem solving strategy, Mothers of children with cancer

### INTRODUCTION

Cancer is in a group of more than 200 diseases characterized by uncontrolled and unregulated growth of cells. Tata Memorial Centre in Mumbai's Parel area alone treats 2,000 new pediatric cancer cases annually.

When a person in the family is affected by cancer it is the family members who provide the maximum care to those affected by the disease. Cancer has direct impact on the entire family; this impact has been compared to the result of dropping a stone in a pond. The illness causes changes in the family's identity and the daily routines of life.

The mothers of children with cancer face a lot of problems which are not addressed. But there is no particular study which gives a clear idea about what are their problems and how do they face their problems. After an extensive review of literature regarding problems of mothers and by the personal experience in this field, the investigator was interested to research on the same and has selected the present study.

### DESIGN & METHODS

Research approach was mixed method, an embedded design was selected for the study. Study was undertaken after the approval by the institutional ethical committees. Eight subjects satisfying the inclusion criteria and exclusion criteria were selected by purposive sampling. Information was collected using baseline proforma, rating scale and semi structured interview. The time taken for tool completion for each subject was 40 - 45 minutes. Analysis was done using the descriptive and inferential statistics and thematic analysis for semi structured interview. A leaflet on problem and problem solving strategy of mothers having children with cancer was given to the mothers after which opinionnaire was collected on the same.

### RESULTS

#### Section 1: Baseline Characteristics of mothers of children with cancer.

Table I shows the baseline characteristics and percentage of the subjects under the study.

#### Section 2: problems of the mothers of children with cancer.

The Data presented in figure 1 represents that 50% of the subjects (majority) had quite a bit problems, 37.5 % of subjects had very much problems and 12.5% had somewhat problems. The data presented in Table 2 shows that the mean percentage problem scores in domain wise.

#### Section 3: problem solving strategies of mothers of children with cancer.

The data presented in figure 2 shows the thematic presentation of problem solving strategies of mothers of children with cancer.

#### Section 4: association between problems of mothers of children with cancer and selected demographic variables.

'P' value computed between problems of mothers of children with cancer , two demographic variables such as information on cancer and source of knowledge are less than 0.05 (  $p < 0.05$ ) level of significance and were significant.

#### Section 5: opinionnaire on problem and problem solving strategy of mothers having children with cancer

The data presented in figure 3 shows that the percentage of effectiveness of leaflet distribution on the use of problem solving strategies. This leaflet was helpful majority of the subjects (100%) in physical, psychological, spiritual and care related, least of the subjects (50%) was only in financial.

### DISCUSSION

This study has been compared with the other studies conducted in Korea, Chennai and Saudi, since we couldn't find similar studies. Instead of problem solving strategy the studies with coping mechanism, prayer methods etc being used. This study in the qualitative part is been divided into seven domain. But stress or psychological or physical domain were used in other studies. Changes will be made in the minor study after seeking guidance from the experts.

### CONCLUSION

The highest problem occurred in the psychological domain (93.6%). 50% of the mothers use problem solving methods with or without knowledge; but, rest of the mothers did not use this method, because, they did not want to reveal their problems to others; as they are not able to find solution for their problems.

**Table 1 Frequency and percentage distribution of subjects according to their baseline characteristics**

VARIABLES	F	P
<b>Marital status</b>		
1. Married	6	75
2. Widow	1	12.5
3. Divorced	-	0
4. Separated	1	12.5

<b>Education of mothers</b>		
1. primary	5	62.5
2. high school	-	-
3. higher secondary	2	25
4. graduate	-	-
5. post graduate	1	12.5
<b>Occupation</b>		
1. home maker	5	62.5
2. semi skilled	2	25
3. skilled	-	-
4. professional	1	12.5
<b>Religion</b>		
1. Hindu	4	50
2. Muslim	3	37.5
3. Christian	1	12.5
4. Any other	-	-
<b>Type of family</b>		
1. Nuclear	4	50
2. Joint	2	25
3. Extended	2	25
<b>Residence</b>		
1. Rural	6	75
2. Urban	2	25
<b>No. of children</b>		
1. One	3	37.5
2. Two	2	25
3. Three	1	12.5
4. 4 or more	2	25
<b>Child education</b>		
1. Not yet admitted	2	25
2. LKG/ UKG	-	-
3. Primary	3	37.5
4. High school	2	25
5. Higher secondary	1	12.5
<b>Diagnosis</b>		
1. ALL	5	62.5
2. AML	2	25
3. Spinal tumor	1	12.5
<b>Treatment modality</b>		
1. Chemotherapy only	4	50
2. Chemotherapy and radiation therapy	3	37.5
3. Chemotherapy, radiation therapy& surgery	1	12.5
<b>Is there any previous history of cancer in your family</b>		
1. Yes	2	25
2. No	6	75
<b>If yes, who in your family</b>		
1. Parents	-	-
2. Siblings	-	-
3. Grandparents	2	100
4. Others	-	-
<b>Specify the type of cancer</b>		
1. Head and neck	-	-
2. Breast cancer	-	-
3. GI tract cancer	-	-
4. Blood cancer	2	100
5. Lung cancer	-	-
<b>financial assistance</b>		
1. Yes	6	75
2. No	2	25
<b>If yes, from whom</b>		
1. Insurance scheme	-	-
2. Govt. scheme	5	83.3
3. Temple / Church / NGO'S	1	16.7
4. Others	-	-
<b>Source of information on cancer</b>		
1. Yes	8	100
2. No	-	-

Table 2 wise mean, mean percentage and SD of Problem scores

Domain	mean±SD	Mean %
Physical	21 ± 0.66	84%
Psychological	31.6 ± 3.67	90.4%
Financial	16 ± 2.69	80%
Communication	10 ± 2.95	66.7%
Care related	15.5 ± 3.08	77.55%
Social	11.87 ± 5.4	59.39%
Spiritual	9.12 ±3.98	60.8%
Total	115.13 ± 18.8	

Figure 1. Percentage distribution and grading of problems of mothers of children with cancer

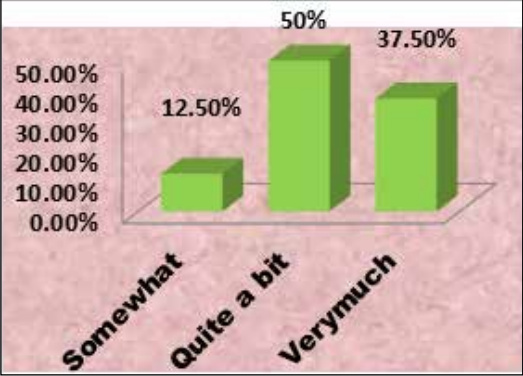


Figure 2: The thematic presentation of problem solving strategies of mothers of children with cancer

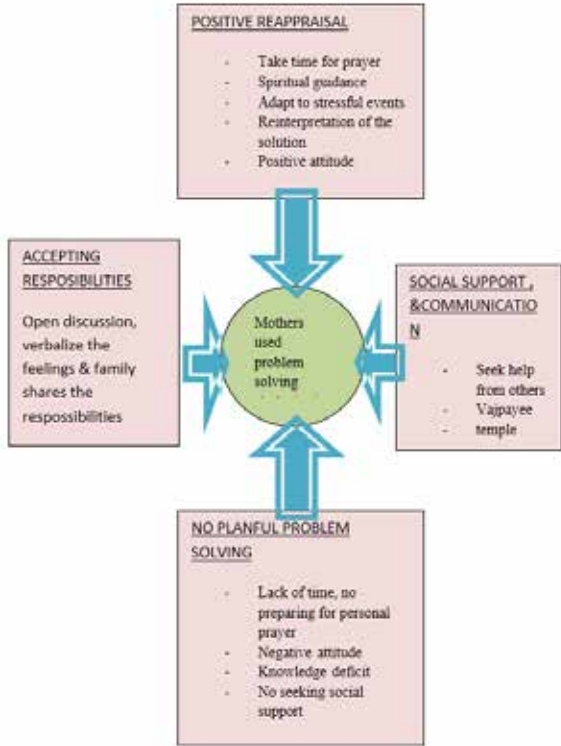
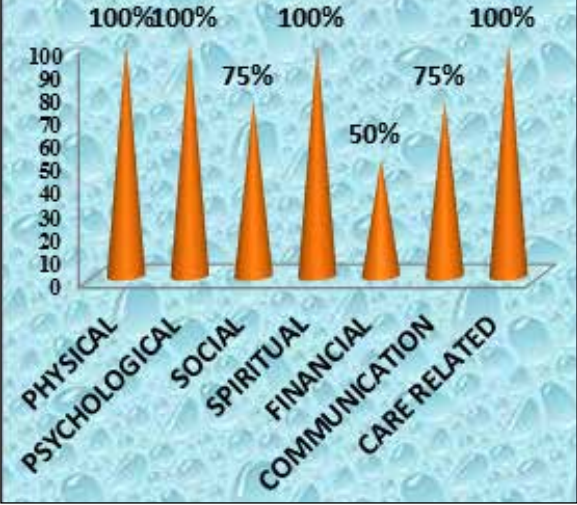


Figure 3: percentage of effectiveness of leaflet distribution on the use of problem solving strategies.



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