



Religious/Spiritual Coping in Childhood Cystic Fibrosis: a Qualitative Study

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Abstract

To understand the role of religiousness/spirituality in coping in children with cystic fibrosis (CF). Participants were a convenience sample of 23 patients with CF, ages 5 to 12 years and their parent(s) in an ambulatory CF clinic. The design was a focused ethnography including in-depth interviews with children and parent(s), children's drawings and self-administered written parental questionnaires. Analysis used grounded theory. Main outcome measures were participants' views on religion/spirituality in coping with illness. Data included 632 quotes organized into 257 codes categorized into 11 themes. One overarching domain emerged from analysis of the 11 themes: religious/spiritual coping composed of 11 religious/spiritual coping strategies. Children with CF reported a variety of religious/spiritual coping strategies they nearly always associated with adaptive health outcomes. A preliminary conceptual framework for religious/spiritual coping in children with CF is presented. More study is needed to assess how variability in age, disease type, disease severity, religious/spiritual preference and religious/spiritual intensity affect religious/spiritual coping in children with chronic illness. Future studies should also investigate whether physician attention to religious/spiritual coping could assist patients in coping with CF and strengthen the doctor-patient relationship.

Keywords: Attitude to Health, Coping, Chronic Disease, Cystic Fibrosis, Psychological.

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