Perceptions of Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplantation and Coping Predict Emotional Distress During the Acute Phase After Transplantation

Michael Baliousis, PhD, DClinPsy, Michael Rennoldson, DClinPsy, David L. Dawson, DClinPsy, Jayne Mills, DClinPsy, and Roshan das Nair, PhD

Hematopoietic stem cell transplantation (HSCT) is a complex and intensive procedure for which its acute phase can last several weeks and involves high toxicity, prolonged isolation, and a range of debilitating side effects (e.g., fatigue, nausea) (Frödin, Börjeson, Lyth, & Lotfi, 2010; Gooley et al., 2010; Mosher et al., 2009). Patients report an overwhelming experience and loss of agency, describing the procedure as a “walk to hell and back” and “really, really hard” (Xuereb & Dunlop, 2003, p. 404). Surveys of psychiatric morbidity in patients undergoing HSCT have found that about half of patients meet clinical criteria for anxiety or depression during the first weeks, with anxiety often greatest around admission and...