Impact of Survivorship Care on Young Adult Survivors of Childhood Cancer With Post-Traumatic Stress Symptoms


OBJECTIVES: To assess post-traumatic stress symptoms (PTSSs) in young adult survivors of childhood cancer not receiving survivorship care and to determine whether attending a survivorship-focused healthcare visit was associated with changes in PTSSs.

SAMPLE & SETTING: 44 young adult survivors from the Yale Cancer Center in Connecticut without prior survivorship clinic attendance.

METHODS & VARIABLES: As part of a larger trial, participants were randomized to a model of survivorship-focused health care. The University of California at Los Angeles Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Reaction Index assessed PTSS severity and frequency before and after the visit.

RESULTS: At baseline, almost half of the participants were classified as partial PTSD likely or PTSD likely. Many met criteria for elevated levels of individual symptoms, particularly avoidance or numbing. At follow-up, PTSSs did not differ significantly from baseline.

IMPLICATIONS FOR NURSING: Survivorship care should be encouraged by nurses in healthcare settings that do not specialize in caring for long-term survivors. Nurses should facilitate screening for PTSSs and promote interventions among survivors completing cancer therapy to help them transition to survivorship care.

KEYWORDS: adolescent and young adult oncology; survivorship; post-traumatic stress symptoms

ONF. 46(1), 33–43.

DOI 10.1188/19.ONF.33-43