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Parent and Family Factors Associated with Child Adjustment to Pediatric Cancer

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▶ Abstract

Objective To identify factors that influence the association between parent and child distress among families of children with cancer and comparison peers. **Methods** Parent and child distress, social support, and family environment were assessed among families of 95 children with cancer (94 mothers, 67 fathers) and 98 comparison peers (97 mothers, 77 fathers). **Results** Significant associations were found between parent and child distress. For models examining the impact of fathers' distress on children, several moderators were identified (i.e., family environment, child age and gender, a cancer diagnosis, and treatment severity). Family environment also partially mediated father and child


distress. **Conclusions** Children whose parents were distressed were more likely to be distressed themselves. Subgroups of children were particularly vulnerable, indicating a need to identify further mechanisms of risk and resilience and to develop family-based interventions. Support was found for including fathers as independent sources of information in pediatric psychology research and clinical practice.


Key words: adjustment; cancer; families; family environment; social support.


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