

QUALITY OF LIFE AND FAMILY FUNCTIONING TWO YEARS AFTER DIAGNOSIS OF A CHILDHOOD BRAIN TUMOUR

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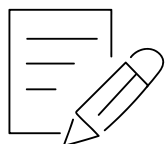


BACKGROUND

We know that childhood brain tumour is a challenging experience for a family. However, little research has considered the psychological and social (psychosocial) wellbeing of families early after a child is diagnosed. We looked at quality of life for parents/carers and the diagnosed child across five timepoints in the first two years after diagnosis of a brain tumour. We also looked at family functioning (how well a family works together).



WHAT WE DID

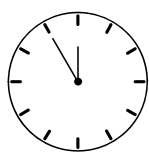


Ninety-six parents/carers of a child diagnosed with a brain tumour volunteered to complete surveys about their experiences. They were recruited from the Queensland Children's Hospital. In this paper, we considered (1) if quality of life and family functioning change over time, and (2) does this vary for different families?

WHAT WE FOUND

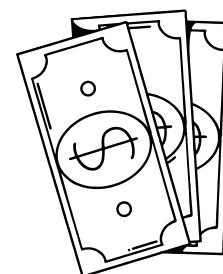
Time alone is not a healer.

Quality of life for the child or parent/carer did not improve across the first two years after diagnosis. Neither did family functioning.



Household income plays an important role.

Those with a lower household income (>\$70 000) reported worse cognitive difficulties, pain, and nausea for their child. Parent/carer's quality of life and family functioning were also lowest for the those with a lower income.



Having a child who has chemotherapy and/or radiation was associated with the poorest outcomes

for children (pain, movement and balance, nausea, worry) and for parents/carers compared to those who had surgery only/other treatments. This was especially the case for children with a low-grade tumour who went on to have these more intensive treatments.



WHAT WE ARE DOING NOW



We are developing a support program for families of a child diagnosed with a brain tumour to address these needs. Please email Professor Natalie Bradford (natalie.bradford@qut.edu.au) if you would like to know more about this or any of our other research.



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