Survivorship: Integrating Life

Medical Considerations

Michael Roth, MD
Professor of Pediatrics
Medical Director, Cancer Survivorship
Co-Director, Adolescent and Young Adult Oncology Program
Director, Childhood Cancer Survivorship Program
University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center
Cancer Survivorship

“An individual is considered a cancer survivor from the time of diagnosis through the rest of life.” – National Cancer Institute

• >2,000,000 survivors of young adult cancer are currently living in the United States
Few studies have assessed long-term outcomes for survivors of young-onset colorectal cancer
Cancer Can Impact Everything!

Cancer can impact all aspects of AYAs’ lives!
Chronic Health Conditions in Young Adult Cancer Survivors

- Survivors of young adult cancer have a higher risk for developing 1 or more chronic health conditions

Chao et al. JCO 2020
Cardiovascular Disease in Young Adult Cancer Survivors

Cardiovascular Disease
Elevated Lipids
High Blood Pressure

Chao et al. JCO 2020
Potential Long-Term Side Effects of Treatment

• Intestinal, anal, and rectal dysfunction
• Urinary dysfunction
• Sexual Health
• Bone Health
• Secondary Cancers
Survivorship Care Needs

- Survivors of young-onset cancer need lifelong:
  - Primary care management of general health
  - Optimal preventative healthcare
  - Risk-based screening for late side effects of treatment
  - Screening for subsequent cancers
Survivorship Care Recommendations

Exercise

Eat Well

Avoid Tobacco, Limit Alcohol

Follow Up with Healthcare
Survivorship: Integrating Life

Psychosocial Considerations

Sujin Ann-Yi, PhD
Assistant Professor, Licensed Psychologist
ECHOS Program Director
Palliative, Rehabilitation and Integrative Medicine
The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center
Psychosocial Issues of YA Cancer Survivors

Cancer disrupts and can impede normal process of development

- Cognitive and emotional skills still developing up to age 25 (Steinberg, 2005)
- Social development: Being separated from peers and feeling “left behind” as peers continue in emerging adulthood phase of development can lead to feelings of loneliness and isolation
- Relationship development: dating, sexuality, body image, fertility concerns
- Education/Career development
Psychosocial Issues of YA Cancer Survivors

Psychological Distress (Crowder et al., 2023; Geue et al, 2021; Barnett et al., 2016; Bellizzi et al, 2012)

- **Depression** - disease/treatment long term effects, chronic symptom burden, changes to physical or cognitive abilities, impaired quality of life

- **Anxiety** - fear of reoccurrence, fear of unknown future, being different from peers, feeling different, cancer related disclosure, lack of control and helplessness

- **Survivor’s guilt** versus difficulty accepting “neither sick nor healthy”

- **Trauma** responses, avoidance
Psychosocial Issues of YA Cancer Survivors

**Psychological Distress Cont.** (Crowder et al., 2023; Geue et al, 2021; Barnett et al., 2016; Bellizzi et al, 2012)

- **Self esteem** - feeling self-conscious, changes in relationships, changes in appearance, body image
- **Grief** - secondary losses including fertility, relationships, future goals, achievements, and milestones
- **Financial Stress** - medical debt, job loss, job instability

Unmet emotional and psychological needs for AYAs post treatment
Psychosocial Issues of YA Cancer Survivors

Positive Life Impact of Cancer (Bellizzi et al, 2012)

• Improved relationships with mothers, fathers, siblings, friends, and spouses

• Plans for future and goal setting, change in priorities, clearer vision for goals

• Health competence including confidence in ability to take care of your health
Psychosocial Issues of Cancer Survivorship

Interventions and Recommendations (Crowder et al., 2023; Barnett et al., 2016)

• Improved health behaviors such as nutrition and physical activity improved overall well being

• Distraction based coping- temporary, less effective

• Active Processing- psychotherapy (CBT, ACT), mindfulness, psychological growth, making meaning, grief work, integration of cancer into current life

• Seeking support- social media support groups, social support predictor of psychological growth (Love & Sabiston, 2011); less positive social support associated with higher depression and anxiety levels (Merz et al., 2024)

• Seeking medical information concerning possible late and long-term side effects

• Support in fertility/family planning

• Education, job/work/career support
Questions?

Thank you for your attendance