Abstract

Objectives, To explore the health literacy of children diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia (ALL) through their knowledge of their medications. Methods, Within the Basic Interpretive approach to qualitative research, semi-structured interviews were conducted with children from ages 6 to 18 years (n=16) between May and September 2009 to determine their knowledge of medication properties, medication habits and medication teaching. REB approval was obtained. Results, The younger children (mean age 7.5 years) correctly answered, on average, 51% of the questions on colour, 26% of the questions on name, 25% of the questions on frequency, and 8% of the questions on the purposes of their medications. The older children (mean age 16 years) scored at least 35% higher for each characteristic. All of the younger children reported that physicians consistently directed medication education to parents only, and that the younger children were rarely present during these sessions. 13 of the 16 children stated that they want to learn more about and be more involved in education sessions addressing their medications. Conclusion, Children with ALL at the IWK Health Centre do not have a good knowledge of their medications, however most children expressed that they want to know more about their medications.

Keywords

Health Literacy, Health Knowledge, Attitudes, Practice, Neoplasms, Child, Adolescent, Canada.