



Time to talk about parents of ill children

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Submitted Jun 17, 2019. Accepted for publication Aug 08, 2019.

doi: 10.21037/atm.2019.08.52

View this article at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21037/atm.2019.08.52>

The biopsychosocial medical model was proposed to emphasize the role of mentality and environment as significant as biological factors in disease recovery (1). Based upon the consensus of psychological factors in the biopsychosocial medical model, psychological intervention related programmes have been implemented to ensure mental health and improve the prognosis of physiologically ill patients (2). Nevertheless, there have been few social factors related projects since the environments of patients seem hard to change. However, parents of ill children play a pivotal role in children's social environment, providing an entry point to make a difference in ill children's recovery.

There are close interactions between the diagnosis and prognosis of children's diseases and the mentality of their parents. Previous studies have shown that over the course of lengthy treatment for ill children, parents exhibit emotional symptoms and suffer a higher risk of developing mental illnesses, which potentially threatens their physical health (3). Besides, parents, the main participants in childcare, experience a significant decrease in family functions because of abnormal mentality. More seriously, the diminished family functions of negatively affect the prognosis of their ill children and worsen their less-than-happy childhood (4,5). In conclusion, parental mental health has dual effect: it serves as psychological and social factors respectively in the health of themselves and ill children.

Considering the grievously double-harmful effects generated by the abnormal mental state of parents of ill children, effective evaluation and interventions should be adopted to alleviate their negative emotions. Unfortunately, only a limited number of studies have focused on the psychological health parents of ill children (3,6). Besides, there has been no project with a systematic assessment and

regular interventions for these parents.

This paper is a call for more focus on the psychological health of parents of ill children. A system of mental assessment, intervention and follow-up is necessary, especially for parents of severely or chronically ill children. An early psychological assessment of parents is advocated, followed by a reasonable psychological intervention or therapy accordingly. A regular follow-up contributes to ensure the mental health of the parents until the condition of their children is stable. An integrated and reasonable psychological counselling system for parents is in favour to enhance their quality of life and improve the prognosis of their children. Furthermore, better prognosis of ill children signifies fewer complications and an earlier recovery, which may help alleviate doctors' workload.

The counseling system is beneficial for ill children, parents, and doctors. It helps achieve an advance in the biopsychosocial medical model, and a humanistic institution by assigning equal attention to mental and physical health.

Acknowledgments

None.

Footnote

Conflicts of Interest: The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

Ethical Statement: The authors are accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

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Cite this article as: Xiang Y, Long E, Liu Z, Lin H. Time to talk about parents of ill children. *Ann Transl Med* 2019;7(Suppl 6):S233. doi: 10.21037/atm.2019.08.52