Mothers' Experiences of Caring for a Child with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia in the West Bank, Palestine: A Qualitative Study

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Introduction

Childhood ALL is the most common pediatric cancer (25–30% of cases), making caregiving a chronic, high-stress commitment.

In the West Bank, Palestinian mothers face compounded hardships due to political violence, military checkpoints, road closures, and healthcare fragmentation.

Objective :explore the experiences of mothers caring for children with acute lymphoblastic leukemia in the West Bank, Palestine

Methodology

- **Design:** Qualitative conventional content analysis (Graneheim & Lundman approach).
- **Setting:** Huda Al-Masri Pediatric Cancer Department, Beit Jala Hospital, West Bank.
- **Participants:** Purposive sampling of mothers
- **Data Collection:** Face-to-face semi-structured in-depth interviews.

Results

- **Shocked**
- **Rejection and denial**

Emotional issues

- **Limited access to care**
- **Checkpoints**
- **Movement restriction**

Political and structural barriers

- **Caregiver burden vs. protective bonding**
- **Financial strain**
- **Sibling neglect**
- **Marital life impact (positive and negative)**
- **Challenges in balancing home routine**

Impact of the child's illness

- **Social support**
- **Fatality and religious aspects**
- **Being positive and optimistic**

Resilience and Endurance

- **Emotional and Psychological Support**
- **Educational and informational needs**
- **Financial needs**

Mothers' Needs to Enhance Resilience

Discussion and conclusion

- **Psychological Trauma**: Findings align with global pediatric oncology literature regarding initial shock, anxiety, and fear of relapse.
- **Structural Violence**: Uniquely demonstrates how political occupation, checkpoints, and movement restrictions serve as primary determinants of maternal distress and isolation.
- **Coping Framework**: Faith (spirituality/fatalism) and social networks act as essential buffers, transforming severe hardship into endurance and adaptive coping.

Conclusion: Palestinian mothers endure multidimensional hardships shaped by both severe disease burden and political constraints, while exhibiting remarkable adaptive resilience.

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