

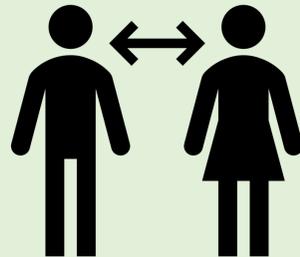
Peer Support Experiences in Patients with Hematologic Malignancies Undergoing Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplantation: A Qualitative Study

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Introduction

- ❖ Peer support entails cancer survivors sharing emotional, social, and practical help with each other based on the lived experience of their illness and treatment
- ❖ Evidence of impact of peer support in HSCT recipients is limited
- ❖ However, the **unique recovery needs** after HSCT (prolonged quarantine, mandatory isolation) is conducive to significant benefits from peer support



Methods

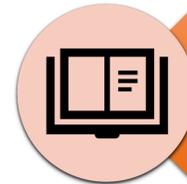
Study Design

- ❖ We conducted semi-structured qualitative telephone interviews
- ❖ Interviews explored: previous knowledge and experience of peer support and preferences for peer support intervention

Participants

- ❖ 25 Patients either ≤ 6 months post-HSCT without GvHD or ≥ 6 months post-HSCT with GvHD were identified using purposive sampling

Results



Participant Definition of Peer Support: "Support is a big word, and it's just being able to talk to somebody else that's kind of been there and they're going through some of the stuff that you are... Being able to talk about your fears... [and] your physical symptoms." – ID11



Intended Benefit: Advice for Managing Physical Symptoms: "Just how you dealt with the eating restrictions and the visiting restrictions and the cleaning protocols...What are some tricks that people have done? ...What hasn't worked for people?" – ID12



Intended Benefit: Emotional Connection: "It's really all the nonmedical questions...the personal aspect. There's the family life and the kids. So yeah, there's that aspect of life that you'd like some advice on, that you have questions on." – ID17



Best Time for Engagement: "Prior to transplant...it might be good to have somebody who's already been through it describe to you a little bit more about the hospital stay... after that, more long-term support" – ID01

Patient Characteristics	Without GVHD (N=12)	With GVHD (N=13)	Total (N=25)
Age, median (range)	58.5 (25-73)	61 (22-73)	63 (22-73)

Conclusions

HSCT recipients desire peer support and 65% of them were optimistic for its potential benefits



Implications

Future work should characterize elements of peer support most pertinent for HSCT recipients