Grief and Gracefulness Regarding Cancer Experiences Among Young Women

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The challenges for young women with cancer aged 20–39 years are complex and include disruptions in identity development and barriers to reaching life milestones, such as family initiation and parenthood (Love & Donovan, 2014). The difficulties are similar to those for young adults in general, but young women are faced with compounding challenges because of their roles as single women, wives, and/or mothers. Often, young women desire to begin or grow their families, but those aspirations are placed on hold while the multitude of decisions surrounding cancer treatment takes precedence. Therefore, women who may become infertile because of cancer treatment and those who balance parenthood with cancer treatment begin the process of grieving. While desiring to have a child and caring for a child are not the same, these groups of women still have important similarities and differences. This study will explore their unique experiences through a secondary analysis of an ethnographic study of blogs of young adult women with cancer (Keim-Malpass & Steeves, 2012).