Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplantation: Stress, psychoneurologic symptoms, and coping strategies in adolescents and young adults

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Strategies to assist emerging adults (aged 18–28 years) and the adolescent and young adult (AYA) population overall in coping with cancer-related stressors and psychoneurologic symptoms have been insufficient to improve the quality of cancer care (Peckham, Block, Buchanan, & Pommier, 2017; Robb et al., 2014). Psychoneurologic symptoms commonly reported by AYAs following hematopoietic stem cell transplantation (HSCT) include anxiety, depression, fatigue, and pain. The prevalence of these symptoms has spurred researchers to recommend that patients be screened for these symptoms prior to HSCT to inform personalized coping strategies (Kreitler & Kreitler, 2012; Tecchio et al., 2013).

Complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) appeals to AYAs as a means of coping with these symptoms. One example of CAM is a publicly available illness blog authored by a young adult woman undergoing HSCT.

AT A GLANCE
- Internet ethnography was used to study the online illness blog; this relatively new method allows the researcher to understand the lived experience of an individual in an online world.
- Psychoneurologic symptoms experienced by a blogger aligned with symptoms outlined in previous qualitative studies of AYAs undergoing transplantation.
- Blogging is a CAM method that may be useful to the upcoming, technologically savvy population during times of intense stress and isolation, such as during HSCT.

KEYWORDS
hematopoietic stem cell transplantation; coping strategies; adolescents; young adults

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