Article

Needs and Lifestyle Challenges of Adolescents and Young Adults With Cancer: Summary of an Institute of Medicine and Livestrong Foundation Workshop

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Background: Among adolescents and young adults (AYAs) in the United States, cancer is the leading cause of disease-related death. AYA survivors face numerous short- and long-term health and psychosocial issues, as well as increased risk for behavioral and lifestyle challenges, including poor diet, low physical activity (PA), and substance abuse. Many of these behaviors are modifiable, but gaps in care serve as barriers for AYA survivors.

Objectives: The purpose of this article is to (a) raise awareness of AYAs’ increased risk for poor diet, low PA, and substance abuse; (b) examine previous interventions addressing these issues; and (c) provide recommendations for future directions.

Methods: This article summarizes a workshop coordinated by the Institute of Medicine and the Livestrong Foundation to address AYA survivors’ needs and ways to enhance their quality of care.

Findings: Oncology nurses can promote the inclusion of lifestyle behaviors in survivorship care plans of AYA patients and serve as a valuable resource in improving AYA care on a larger scale. In addition, oncology nurse researchers may offer greater understanding of AYA patients’ and survivors’ needs and best practices by conducting much-needed research with this understudied population.