

An evaluation of a virtual camp to improve access to psychosocial supports and enhance psychosocial outcomes for children with cancer and their families in Canada

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Background

Childhood cancer patients often endure lengthy and challenging treatment processes, which may lead to declining physical health and psychological health. The emergence of virtual cancer camps presents an alternative to traditional in-person camps, with the primary objective of overcoming accessibility barriers to deliver such recreational therapy. To better support children affected by cancer and their families, and enhance their quality of life, it is crucial to understand and improve the design and delivery of virtual camp programs. This presentation will present a study that aims to better understand the accessibility, feasibility, and effectiveness of current virtual cancer camps operated by Camp Quality Canada using a mixed-methods approach.

Method

Quantitative surveys, comprising baseline and endline assessments, are being administered with child campers using validated scales to evaluate changes in psychosocial well-being. Complementary qualitative data is being collected through semi-structured interviews designed to explore experiences and perspectives regarding the current virtual service with child campers, parents and staff. Observational data will also be collected, to examine the ways in which the virtual environment influences children's and families' experiences and psychosocial outcomes.

Result

As data collection and analysis are ongoing, this presentation will focus on introducing the virtual camps, the study design and methodological approach. Particular attention will be given to how this study is positioned to generate insights into the psychosocial well-being of children affected by cancer and to inform strategies for enhancing the quality of life of the children and their families through a virtual approach.

Conclusion

This study will contribute new knowledge to the current research gap concerning virtual psychosocial support for children affected by cancer, providing an in-depth understanding of the psychosocial impacts and feasibility of virtual camps. The findings will guide virtual support services tailored to the unique needs of patients and highlight the potential of virtual spaces in healthcare and social service delivery.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

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