|  |
| --- |
| **Health care experiences of mothers of children with bronchiectasis in Counties Manukau, Auckland** |
| **Background/Objectives**  Bronchiectasis, a chronic respiratory condition commonly affecting indigenous and low socioeconomic groups, is a worsening public health problem in New Zealand, particularly in the Counties Manukau area in Auckland. Poor disease awareness and access to health care may influence the development of bronchiectasis. The aim of this study was to explore mothers’ health care experiences when accessing care for their child with bronchiectasis in the Counties Manukau District Health Board. By exploring parents’ health care experiences, this research aimed to identify barriers and enablers to accessing health care and identify areas for health service improvement, to improve equity in accessing and utilising health services.  **Methods**  Mothers of children (aged 0-17 years) with bronchiectasis were identified from outpatient bronchiectasis clinics. Semi-structured interviews were undertaken with ten participants. Data were analysed using thematic analysis.  **Results**  Five themes emerged: 1) Searching for answers, describing mothers’ search for a diagnosis; 2) (Dis)empowerment, describing mothers’ acquisition of knowledge, leading to empowerment; 3) Health care and relationships, describing the impact of relationships on the mother’s health care experiences; 4) A juggling act, describing the challenges of juggling health care with school, work and family; 5) Making it work, describing how parents overcome barriers to access health care for their child.  **Discussion**  The health provider-parent relationship was crucial for fostering positive health care experiences. Mothers wanted to be treated as experts on their child, yet often felt vulnerable in the early stages of the disease. Acquisition of knowledge about the disease and available health services facilitated empowerment within health provider-parent relationships. Additionally, mothers’ perceptions of the quality and benefit of health services motivated them to overcome barriers to accessing care. By emphasising patient-centred care, improving communication and providing easily accessible services, health services may be targeted to improve health care experiences for mothers of children with bronchiectasis and all health care consumers. This may improve equitable health care access and health outcomes by enabling empowerment, learning opportunities and allowing consumers to take a more central role in their, or their child’s health care.  **Keywords**  Bronchiectasis, experiences, health care access, equity |