

# The Effectiveness of Parent-child Play Therapy on Depression Symptoms in Children with Cancer, Decreasing Perceived Stress on Their Mothers and Improving Parent-child Relationship

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## Abstract

Cancer in children causes psycho-social, physical and economic difficulties for both children and their families. Psychotherapy tries to find ways to reduce the negative effects of the cancer on children and their families. The present study, aimed to assess the effect of parent-child play therapy on depression symptoms in children with cancer, decreasing perceived stress on their mothers and improving parent-child relationship. A total of 14 children diagnosed with cancer and their mothers (28 individuals), referred to Dr. Sheikh Hospital in the city of Mashhad, were selected and randomly assigned into two groups of intervention and control. Mothers answered the Perceived Stress and the the Parent-child Relationship Scales, Children filled Child Depression Inventory, both in pre-test and post-test. Intervention delivered individually comprising 8 one hour session of parent-child play therapy. Data were analyzed by SPSS software version 16, using analysis of covariance. Compared to control group, scores of children in intervention group in CDI reduced significantly from pre to post test. Also scores in PCRS increased significantly for intervention group. Scores in PSS did not change significantly. Conclusion: parent-child play therapy can be effective in reducing depression symptoms of children with cancer, and improving parent-child relationship. It cannot be effective for reducing mothers level of perceived stress.

Keywords: Children Cancer, Play Therapy, Child Depression, Perceived Stress, Parent-Child Relationship

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