

Social and emotional skills of pediatric brain tumor survivors: a systematic review of psychosocial interventions

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Background: Pediatric Brain Tumor Survivors (PBTS) experience lifetime evolving late effects. Social and emotional sequelae are reported by PBTS as a major source of morbidity impacting long-term quality of life. Increasing survival PBTS rates have led to an urgent need for psychosocial and neuropsychological interventions for this population.

Objectives: This study is a systematic review on the psychosocial interventions dedicated to improving social and emotional skills of PBTS.

Methods: Four electronic databases (PubMed, Embase, PsychINFO et Cochrane) were searched. Articles were reviewed by 2 researchers, and their quality was independently evaluated. Selected articles were interventional studies drawn from a broader systematic review on psychosocial impacts experienced by PBTS, conducted by our team and registered on Prospero.

Results: From the 5697 articles identified, 12 were included in this review. Selected articles are interventions from 1996 to 2022. Most interventions (n=9) were group-based and targeted learning coping strategies and improving social adjustment competencies. A third of interventions primarily focused on feasibility and acceptability (n=4) and reported good attendance rates. Results emphasized the satisfaction of participants with meeting peers experiencing similar psychosocial difficulties. Sharing a common background on the disease and its late effects seems to contribute to a sense of belonging. None were co-constructed with patients. Participants from 8 interventions showed improvement either in social skills, behavioral problems or quality of life.

Conclusion: This review lays the groundwork for a future psychosocial intervention targeting the social and emotional skills of PBTS.

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