

# Children and young people's needs and preferences for support when living with a parent with incurable cancer: a Grounded Theory study

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## Background

Living with a life-threatening ill parent - and losing a mom or dad at a young age can be challenging. Without satisfactory support, children and young people are at risk of developing low self-esteem, behavioural difficulties (e.g., anger and aggression), long-term illness or premature death caused by severe mental illness, substance abuse, self-harm, and suicide attempts. More knowledge is needed to gain a broader understanding of their preferences and need throughout the parent's course of illness.

## Aim of the study

To explore children and young people's needs and preferences for support as they live with a parent with incurable cancer.

## Methods

Qualitative interviews conducted on 10 respondents (17-25 years) in Norway and Sweden, analyzed through Grounded Theory according to Charmaz.

## Results

Children and young peoples' needs and preferences for support were described through the core category; *To feel safe and prepared*, together with five subcategories; "Interactions in the immediate family - balancing support and protection"; "The social network - support and normalcy in a carefully selected group"; "Finding new meaning in everyday life - challenges in school and working life"; "The right support at the right time - competence, trust and continuity in meeting HCPs"; and "Support outside the home - an opportunity for full transparency".

## **Conclusions and implications**

HCPs' should map out which support network the individual is surrounded by and take into account that their needs and preferences change in line with the parent's disease development.