

Dissertation
“Psychological Issues of Mothers of Children with Cancer: Medical Trauma and Parenting Anxiety”
Satomi Funaki Sato

Abstract

This dissertation examined the relationship between medical trauma and parenting anxiety of mothers of children with cancer. It is estimated that 2,000 to 2,500 children would be suffered from cancer every year in Japan. Mothers are easy to feel the distress because the patient is very young. It is unclear whether psychological risk of mothers might be higher or not, but it is pointed out that mothers' psychological risk could affect the parenting.

It is questioned on what is psychological risk of mothers of children with cancer although researches describe mothers as a vulnerable people being passive. Specifically, this thesis states “exploring the relationship between medical trauma and parenting anxiety.” Thus, this dissertation tests the hypothesis in each chapter.

In Chapter 3, questionnaires were conducted among mothers to examine the relationship between medical trauma and parenting anxiety. As a result, medical trauma correlates weakly to parenting anxiety, being independent each other. In addition to that, the environment makes mothers being easily emotional. Free response by questionnaire survey of mothers, in Chapter 4, showed mothers were readjust in their community after treatment, turning an unbelievable tragedy to appreciation for going back to a community while they kept the tension for relapse. It was valid that appreciation for going back to a community was a part of appropriate strategy rather than personal psychological growth. In Chapter 5, through case studies, parenting anxiety became stronger when mother recognized her child were able to go back to a normal life.

In conclusion, it is supported that “psychological issues of mothers of children with cancer is not only experiencing medical trauma, but also having parenting anxiety at

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the same time.” In particular, parenting anxiety before medical trauma was depressed when saving a child’s life was first priority. However, parenting anxiety came back when medical trauma became weaker. Therefore, medical trauma is defined as a general and inner experience among mothers of children with cancer while medical trauma turns into parenting anxiety when it comes up in mind.