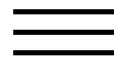


Identifying religious and/or spiritual perspectives of adolescents and young adults receiving blood and marrow transplants: a prospective qualitative study.

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Brief Article

### Identifying Religious and/or Spiritual Perspectives of Adolescents and Young Adults Receiving Blood and Marrow Transplants: A Prospective Qualitative Study

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### Abstract

The potential benefits (or detriments) of religious beliefs in adolescent and young adults (AYA) are poorly understood. Moreover, the literature gives little guidance to health care teams or to chaplains about assessing and addressing the spiritual needs of AYA receiving hematopoietic stem cell transplants (HSCT). We used an institutional review board–approved, prospective, longitudinal study to explore the use of religion and/or spirituality (R/S) in AYA HSCT recipients and to assess changes in belief during the

transplantation experience. We used the qualitative methodology, grounded theory, to gather and analyze data. Twelve AYA recipients were interviewed within 100 days of receiving HSCT and 6 participants were interviewed 1 year after HSCT; the other 6 participants died. Results from the first set of interviews identified 5 major themes: using R/S to address questions of “why me?” and “what will happen to me;” believing God has a reason; using faith practices; and benefitting from spiritual support people. The second set of interviews resulted in 4 major themes: believing God chose me; affirming that my life has a purpose; receiving spiritual encouragement; and experiencing strengthened faith. We learned that AYA patients were utilizing R/S far more than we suspected and that rather than losing faith in the process of HSCT, they reported using R/S to cope with illness and HSCT and to understand their lives as having special purpose. Our data, supported by findings of adult R/S studies, suggest that professionally prepared chaplains should be proactive in asking AYA patients about their understanding and use of faith, and the data can actively help members of the treatment team understand how AYA are using R/S to make meaning, address fear, and inform medical decisions.



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## Key Words

Religion; Spiritual; Adolescent; Young adult

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