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Childhood cancer is a leading cause of death among children worldwide. While survival rates exceed 80% in high-income countries due to access to effective treatments and evidence-based care, they remain below 30% in many low- and middle-income countries, including Malawi (World Health Organisation, 2026). Despite initiatives to improve outcomes, evidence on holistic models of care to support children with cancer and their families in this context is limited.

In this presentation, I will share healthcare professionals' perspectives on childhood cancer care that will inform a holistic care model for supporting children with cancer and their parents and/or extended family members in Malawi. I applied an interpretive description design and used purposive sampling to recruit 10 healthcare professionals: comprising medical doctors, nurses, social care workers, nutritionists, and physiotherapists. I analysed the data using Morse's analytical framework (Thorne, 2008), which consists of four cognitive elements: comprehending, synthesising, theorising, and re-contextualising. Three themes were identified: (1) Child and family needs as essential to childhood cancer care, emphasising the need for holistic support for the sick child and the family; (2) Care through a cultural lens, underscoring the need to integrate cultural understanding into care; (3) Strengthening health systems, which reflects the importance of improving system capacity and resources to support equitable and effective childhood cancer care.

The findings will contribute to the body of knowledge on childhood cancer care and inform the development of a holistic model of care that addresses the interconnected physical, emotional, psychosocial, spiritual, and health system-related needs of children and their families while providing culturally responsive care in Malawi and similar settings.

Keywords

Child, Cancer, Developing Countries, Family, Malawi

References

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