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The Role of Emotion Regulation in Cancer Caregiver Wellbeing

Who is conducting the research?

The research is being conducted by Dr Janelle Levesque and Mr Dean Cooper from the Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, Monash University.

What is the research about?

The aim of this study is to explore the relationship between emotion regulation and wellbeing in cancer caregivers. Caring for a person with cancer carries significant psychological challenges for the caregiver, with caregivers experiencing distress, depression and anxiety at rates comparable to, or in excess of, patients. Furthermore, these conditions persist over time and increase in prevalence for the caregivers of advanced stage cancer to rates in excess of 50%.

Emotion regulation plays a significant role in individual's psychological wellbeing, yet to date no known research has explored the role of emotion regulation in cancer caregivers or how this may influence wellbeing. By placing focus on emotion regulation, our research will shift focus away from carer psychopathology and look at one avenue that may be used by carers to cope and adjust to the challenges they face, which in the future could guide additional research and intervention development.

How will it help children and young people with cancer and/or their families?

The psychological literature suggests that common psychological conditions, such as depression, generalised anxiety disorder and substance use are responsive to interventions that target emotion regulation strategies. Furthermore, emotion regulation therapy has demonstrated effectiveness in treating anxiety with co-morbid depression. Therefore, if we can begin to determine the relationship between emotion regulation and psychological wellbeing in caregivers, we may potentially identify an avenue for intervention.

For participants, there are unlikely to be direct benefits, however they will receive feedback on their score on the measure used for depression. If scores indicate an elevated level of depression, they will be encouraged to seek support and will be provided with details of suitable support organisations, therefore taking part in the survey may prompt someone to seek the assistance they need.

Who can take part?

You can take part in this study if you have experience caring for someone who has been diagnosed with cancer. You are eligible to participate if you are a) over 18 years of age, b) sufficiently fluent in English to complete a survey, c) are currently caring for, or have cared for someone with cancer in the past 6 months, d) reside in Australia.

What will participants be asked to do?

You will be asked to complete an anonymous, online, self-report survey including questions that measure your mood, psychological wellbeing, ways you manage your emotions and general demographic questions about you and the person you care for/have cared for. The survey can be completed at any time of the day and from any location, so long as you can use a device that connects to the internet. This survey should take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

When and where is the research taking place?

The study is online and will be running until July 2019

Who has reviewed this study?

This study has been reviewed by the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (ID 18501).

How to find out more

If you would like to find out more about this study, please contact Mr Dean Cooper on 0433933474 or dcoo0003@student.monash.edu

Please note that by asking for more information you are not committing yourself in any way.