Play of Children with Life-threatening/limiting Conditions: A Scoping Review

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Introduction

• Play a synonym to childhood (James et al. 1998)
• Play is essential to children and provides opportunities to promote their health and wellbeing (Rubin et al. 1983; Parham 2008)

• Regardless of the child’s condition, it is their right to live and act as children (United Nations 2006; World Health Organization 2007; Boucher et al. 2014)
Introduction

- Children living with life-threatening/limiting conditions (LTC/LLC) experience disruption in their play (Boucher et al. 2014; Amery 2016)

- LTC/LLC characterized with prognostic uncertainty (Brook and Hain 2008; McNamara-Goodger and Feudtner 2012; Shaw et al. 2015)

→ Parallel planning
Study’s objective

Review empirical studies discussing the play of children living with LTC/LLC to explore

Aim

Children’s play characteristics  Factor influencing children’s play
Methods

• The review was carried out according to Aveyard (2014) guidance as the following in 5 steps.

• Reviewed by the research team and another external reviewer.
Methods

1. Data sources

2. Search strategy

3. Selection criteria

4. Data appraisal

5. Data analysis

Comprehensive search in electronic databases (e.g. EMBASE, CINAHL, Medline, PsycINFO), grey literature, manual searches of relevant journals and reference lists
Methods

1. Data sources
2. Search strategy
3. Selection criteria
4. Data appraisal
5. Data analysis

- Main search terms “children”, “play”, and “LTC/LLC”
- Papers published between 1990 and October week 2 2017
- Literature written in the Arabic or English languages
## Methods

1. Data sources
2. Search strategy
3. Selection criteria
4. Data appraisal
5. Data analysis

- Studies discussed the play of children with LLC/LTC
- Research included children aged between 5-11 years
- Exclude: play effectiveness literature
Methods

Figure 1 PRISMA flowchart of study retrieval and selection process
Methods

1. Data sources
2. Search strategy
3. Selection criteria
4. Data appraisal
   - Critical appraisal skills program
   - Joanna Briggs Institute Critical Appraisal Tools
5. Data analysis
Methods

1. Data sources
2. Search strategy
3. Selection criteria
4. Data appraisal
5. Data analysis

Thematic analysis and synthesis
Findings

Three main themes

1) Continuity of play

2) Influence of the condition on children’s play

3) Limited available play opportunities
Findings

1) Continuity of play

Continuity of the normal everyday lives.

Play aids normality, adds fun & happiness.

Having games they have at home when hospitalized.
Findings

Three main themes

1) Continuity of play

2) Influence of the condition on children’s play

3) Limited available play opportunities
Findings

2) Influence of the condition on children’s play

LTC/LLC places limitations on children’s play.

Leaves children weakened and with limited physical abilities.

The need to follow precautions, medical intervention or isolation.
Findings

Three main themes

1) Continuity of play

2) Influence of the condition on children’s play

3) Limited available play opportunities

   a) Play equipment
   b) Play spaces
   c) Playmates
Findings

3) Limited available play opportunities

a) Play equipment

- Limited availability of toys, age- and gender-appropriate activities.
- Need for maintenance & replacement of toys.
- Inaccessibility to play equipment.
Findings

Three main themes

1) Continuity of play

2) Influence of the condition on children’s play

3) Limited available play opportunities

   a) Play equipment
   b) Play spaces
   c) Playmates
Findings

3) Limited available play opportunities

b) Play spaces

- Playrooms’ specific opening hours
- Shared places allow pleasant social interaction & play
- Hospital unbearable situation when restricting play
Findings

Three main themes

1) Continuity of play

2) Influence of the condition on children’s play
   a) Play equipment
   b) Play spaces
   c) Playmates

3) Limited available play opportunities
Findings

3) Limited available play opportunities
   c) Playmate

- More opportunities for play during presence of other children
- Children’s limited physical abilities during play leads to isolation
- Playing with grown-ups places burden on them
Take home message

• The nature of LTC/LLC and the effects on children’s abilities and functioning negatively influence children’s participation in their childhood occupation which is play.

• Children’s continuous participation in their routines, particularly preferred play, while hospitalized, is important to their wellbeing.

• Different cultural, social and physical environmental factors shape children’s play.
Conclusion

• It is a child’s right to play and live a childhood.

• Children’s play is influenced by the health condition as it challenges and change the type of play they can take part in.

• Play spaces, playmates and play equipment are different play opportunities which shape the type of activities children’s engage in.

• Supporting participation in play for children living with LTC/LLC is essential to achieve a best quality of life possible filled with opportunities for meaningful experiences.
References

- Amery J (2016) *A really practical handbook of children’s palliative care for doctors and nurses anywhere in the world*. Lulu publishing services
Thank you

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