



TITLE: The structure of losses and grief therapy in pediatric oncology

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ABSTRACT (upto 300 words)

Background. Pediatric cancer treatment is accompanied by multiple losses in all spheres of family life and may cause various functional and mental impairments in children. However emotional, behavioral, somatic and neurological symptoms in pediatric cancer patients had still hardly been considered as the objects of grief therapy.

The goal of the study was 1) to analyze types of losses 2) to investigate the features and the dynamic of grieving during grief therapy in children.

The materials and method. We conducted a secondary analysis of our cohort study of 1,298 families with children-survivors in pediatric oncology. Psychotherapy was provided to 18 bereaved children aged 4-13 years (average 7.2), who lost a parent to death. Statistical analysis: SPSS statistics 17.0

Results. The structure of losses in the studied group included worsening of marital relations (18,4%); divorce (8,1%); death of a spouse (12,8%); forced relocation (22,7%); surgical losses (39%); prolonged separation with family members (100%); loss of social connections and status (39.3%) etc. It was found that 20,9% of cancer children were grieving the loss of a parent as a result of divorce or death during a 3-year period after diagnosing. The typical for bereavement "search behavior" was found in 5 children; all the children demonstrated autoaggression, 5 of them developed self-harming behavior; 2 children – severe regress; 7 - the symptoms of hard

depression. It was shown that children could feel grief but their responds to it were often masked as somatic symptoms or maladaptive behavior. Children could complete the grief in a safe and protective space of the Sandplay psychotherapy moving through the tasks of mourning.

Conclusion. It is essential that pediatricians, clinical psychologists and social workers should closely interact to ensure timely delivery of psychological treatment to grieving cancer children and their family members before pathological grief symptoms start to manifest.

BIOGRAPHY (upto 200 words)

Marina Guseva has completed her PHD at the age of 48 from Lomonosov Moscow State University, Russia. She has worked as child and adult psychoanalytic psychotherapist at Moscow cancer clinics since 2014. Since 2006 she is the head of Autonomous non-profit organization for rehabilitation of children with cancer "Children", the head of Moscow city rehabilitation club "Lipki" for families with cancer children. She has over 30 publications that have been cited over 80 times, her publication h-index is 5.

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