

Psychosocial factors associated with transition readiness in adolescents and young adults with juvenile idiopathic arthritis

Howsley P¹, Dunkley L², Calvert R¹, Hawley SJ³, Edgerton J¹, Forsythe M², McMahon AM¹,
Tattersall RS^{1,2}, Verstegen RHJ¹ & Hawley DP¹

¹ Sheffield Children's NHS Foundation Trust, Western Bank, Sheffield, UK

² Royal Hallamshire Hospital, Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Glossop Road, Sheffield, UK

³ Nuffield Department of Orthopaedics, Rheumatology and Musculoskeletal Sciences, University of Oxford, UK

Background

The transition from paediatric to adult health services should be a multidimensional and multidisciplinary process that addresses the medical, psychosocial, and educational needs of adolescents and young adults (AYA). However, there is currently a scarcity of research examining the relationships between psychosocial factors (e.g., anxiety) and transition readiness in AYA with juvenile idiopathic arthritis (JIA). This study therefore aimed to examine the relationships between psychosocial factors and transition readiness in pre-transfer adolescents and post-transfer young adults aged 10-25 years diagnosed with JIA at a single centre.

Methods

In total, 40 adolescents aged 10-16 years ($M_{\text{age}} = 13.54$ years, 26 females), together with a parent/guardian, participated at Sheffield Children's Hospital and 40 young adults aged 16-24 years ($M_{\text{age}} = 20.16$ years, 26 females) participated at Sheffield Teaching Hospitals. Participants completed a battery of self-report questionnaires measuring psychosocial factors (anxiety/depression, prosocial and problem behaviours, health-related quality of life, social support, family functioning) and transition readiness (transition knowledge and skills, self-efficacy). JIA disease severity (indexed by the JADAS3) was also measured. Spearman correlations were computed to assess the relationships between psychosocial factors, JIA disease severity and transition readiness (Table 1). This study received full ethical approval and all participants gave their written informed assent/consent.

Results

Overall, greater transition readiness was associated with better social support, family functioning, and health-related quality of life, and lower anxiety/depression levels in both adolescents and young adults. Greater transition readiness was also associated with less JIA disease activity in post-transfer young adults.

Conclusions

These findings show that a wide range of psychosocial factors are associated with transition readiness in both pre-transfer and post-transfer AYA with JIA. This study therefore highlights the importance of addressing the psychosocial needs of AYA with JIA as they transition from paediatric to adult health services, and suggests a need for improved targeting of psychological support services in this group.