Child Resilience in Response to Sibling Bereavement

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Children facing bereavement are in a highly vulnerable state of emotional grief which often can lead to detrimental effects on growth and development (Sandler, Tein, Cham, Wolchik, & Ayers, 2016). Although some children experience the full range of grief outcomes, other children are resilient in the face of adverse outcome of loss (Bonanno, Wortman, & Nesse, 2004). To date, insufficient research has investigated psychological outcomes of siblings who experience a loss, particularly at an age where there is a higher likelihood of mental illness. In the present study, families of a deceased child were recruited from the palliative care department of a local children’s hospital. The participants completed questionnaires relating to mental health and socialization. The current study investigated the impact of characteristics related to the child’s death (i.e. unexpected/expected death and physical presence during sibling death) on the resilience of their sibling. We hypothesize that siblings of children who passed unexpectedly and were present at the time of death of their sibling will report higher levels of well-being 3 months following sibling death. Data analysis is ongoing and results will be incorporated into the poster presentation. These results may help to identify siblings in need of early interventions following sibling death.
