

The emotional experience of the adolescent with perinatal Human Immunodeficiency Virus infection: a qualitative systematic review

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Abstract. The Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infection affects almost 2 million children in the world, with vertical transmission being the most common way of infection. However, due to medical advances and the development of antiretroviral therapy, children born with perinatal HIV in the last decades are now adolescents in transition into adulthood.

This article intends to characterize the emotional experience of adolescents with perinatal HIV and to identify the conditions that facilitate the transitions experienced by those adolescents. A systematic review of literature based on the methodology of the Joanna Briggs Institute was carried out. Based on the PCC mnemonic, which corresponds to the P (participant) to the adolescent with perinatal HIV infection, the C (concept under study) to emotional management and the C (context) community nursing care, the following research question was formulated: What is the emotional experience of adolescents with perinatal HIV? After defining the selection criteria, the inclusion and exclusion criteria to be applied in the selection process of the articles obtained were outlined. In a search for results in both Portuguese and English and Spanish, the various terms defined were combined using the Boolean operators AND/OR. In addition, the survey was temporarily limited between 2012 and 2017.

After the research according to the various data previously described, an initial sample of 279 articles was obtained. In order to guarantee a rigorous selection of the articles, the inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied, first to the titles, then to the abstract, being a partial or complete reading of the text when necessary. A final sample of 6 articles was then obtained. From the analysis of these findings it emerged that disclosure, family relations, peers/intimate partner, psychological symptoms and risk behaviours are dimensions that influence the emotional experience of these adolescents.

It can be concluded that the emotional experience of adolescents with perinatal HIV infection is mainly negative, due to the changes and challenges that can generate deep emotional conflicts, making them more vulnerable, and predispose them to risky behaviours. These results have as implications for nursing care the need to focus on the promotion of the facilitating factors of this transition, such as the gradual preparation for the diagnosis, the construction of a healthy sexual self-concept, the involvement of the peers, intimate partners and family, among others. As limitations in the accomplishment of this literature review, several studies were mainly focused on African and/or Latin American populations, as well as focused on a target population that included simultaneously children, adolescents and young adults. The fact that the various age groups were mixed did not facilitate the data extraction and analysis process. In addition, we also consider relevant studies focused on the American and European population.

Keywords: adolescent, perinatal HIV, emotional experience.

