



Exploring caregivers' role in oral surgery among transitional aged-youth

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Background

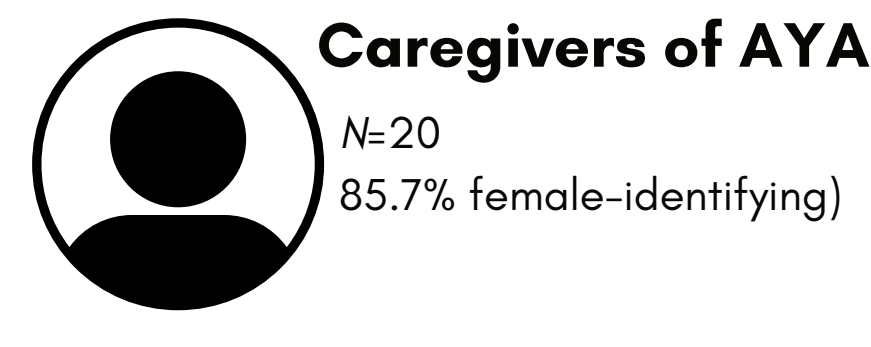
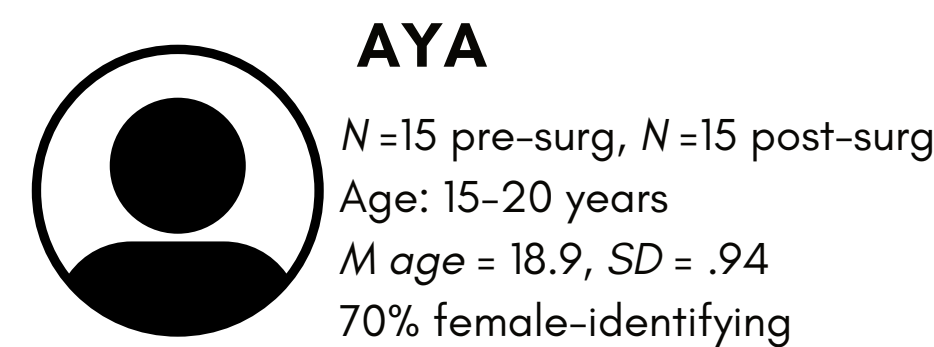
- Oral surgery, specifically wisdom tooth extraction (WTE), is one of the most common painful surgical procedures in adolescents and young adults (AYA).
- Up to 20% of AYA experience post-operative complications that impact quality of life.
- Little research has examined factors that impact the experience of WTE, including caregiver involvement which is often overlooked among transitional age youth.

Aim

- The aim of this study was to explore the role of caregivers in supporting their child through WTE and AYAs' openness to caregiver involvement.

Methods

- Semi-structured, individual interviews were conducted with:



- Interviews were audio recorded and professionally transcribed. Transcripts were double coded for template style thematic analysis.

Results: 4 Themes Emerged

Themes

Theme 1: Helpfulness of caregiver assistance in pre-operative preparation

For many AYA caregivers provided insurance coverage and payment for surgery, lodging at caregiver's home, and help them prepare soft foods prior to WTE.

- Among AYA who live independently, most planned to come home for WTE in order to access support from caregivers & family

Theme 2: Helpfulness of caregivers during post-operative recovery

Caregivers play a role in supporting their AYA with post-operative care activities including transportation home from WTE, medication and pain management, as well as infection prevention.

- Transportation
- Med management
- Ice
- Changing gauze

"You can't really—it's pretty hard to do alone, I would say. It would be pretty miserable if I had to be the person who was doing my ice packs and having to microwave and stuff when I was feeling really sick in the beginning." -Post-surgical AYA

- Providing reassurance
- Comfort

Theme 3: Caregivers provide emotional support and assist with managing perioperative distress

AYA and parents alike described that caregivers play an important role in providing reassurance, comfort, and anxiety management for AYA before and after WTE.

Theme 4: AYA reported relying on caregivers to communicate with dental providers

Caregivers typically schedule their AYA's surgery and perioperative appointments. AYA also reported relying on caregivers to call the surgeon with aftercare questions and/or to address complications during recovery.

Results cont'd

Exemplar Quotes

Theme 1: "I think they're gonna be really helpful with getting everything ready, taking me to and from the appointment, helping with logistics of insurance and all of that stuff." - Pre-surg AYA

Theme 1: "Before surgery, they bought me food that I needed, like the Jell-O and the pudding, oh, and applesauce, like that stuff." -Post-surg AYA

Theme 2: "I did need to remind her for medication, for the amoxicillin, and then just had to keep reminding her...I was chopping up the medication, and here's your meds for today. I was really doling it out and kind of in charge of that..." -Post-surg parent

Theme 2: "I try to be miss independent and do things by myself and I realized in that moment, I'm gonna need someone to go get me this. I wanted to get up and go get water. The second I got home I couldn't walk straight still from my anesthesia. I appreciated the help and I embraced it." -Post-surg AYA

Theme 3: "It's a big relief to have someone there... I'm not alone in this kind of scary procedure, and I have this kind of emotional support." - Pre-surg AYA

Theme 3: "I think, well, there's a logistical level of things where it's like we'll be there to bring you home and take care of you and have the right food available for you, but then there's also an emotional, relational thing where it's like just being encouraging... I think we would try to bring some comfort." - Pre-surg parent

Theme 4: "As a caregiver, as a mom, I should contact the office." - Post-surg parent

Theme 4: "I [would] just be like, 'Oh my God, my mouth hurts.' Like my teeth hurt, and then I would tell my mom, and that's when she actually booked the appointment when I told her." - Post-surg AYA

Conclusions

- Caregivers of AYA undergoing WTE play a significant role in pre-surgical planning, education, emotional support, medication management, and recovery.
- Despite the increase in healthcare independence and autonomy that takes place during adolescence and young adulthood, AYA are generally receptive to and seek out caregiver support in this clinical context
- Future research should examine how to leverage parental involvement in WTE to improve AYA surgical outcomes and recovery.