

Introduction

There is a paucity of research regarding the challenges faced by young adults (YA) who matured with burns. It is well documented that acute burn care is laden with painful surgeries/dressing changes, gruesome physical/occupational therapies, anxiety and time away from family & friends. However, the specific issues young adults burned as children find most challenging remain largely unknown. This study sought to provide YA survivors with an opportunity to describe the difficult issues they endured.

Methods / Results

Burn surviving youth responded to the open-ended statement “The hardest thing about being burned is...” Seven themes were derived from their responses: *People Staring at Me, Being Bullied, Remembering When I was Burned, Having Additional Surgeries, My Scars, Getting Questions About My Burns, & the Pain & Itching*. Young adult survivors were asked to rate each item on a 4-point scale from (1) Not at all to (4) Really a lot. Participants were YA survivors (n=64) mean age 19.1 years, female (62%) male (38%), average age at burn of 6.4 yrs. Sixty-eight percent reported both visible & hidden scars; 25% had a TBSA > 50%. Sixty-six percent were minority race/ethnicity. Girls were bothered significantly more by *My Scars* (p=0.02). Youth with both facial & hand scars had greater issues with *Pain/Itch* (p=0.03).

Lessons Learned

- This study provides insight into problems encountered by maturing burn survivors and discloses the more challenging issues they endured over their recovery journey.
- These data can assist burn centers, camps, and psychotherapists in discussing potential survivor issues and suggest interventions to help burn-injured youth respond to challenges.
- Special consideration should be given to emotional support for girls, those with facial/hand scars, large TBSAs & visible scars.

Funding

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